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THE MORAL OF TOULON

FROM Toulon to Stalingrad this has been a week of hard fighting and startling events on several fronts. The Russians continue to astonish us, and we do not doubt the enemy also by their reserves of strength. While the ambitious movements between Don and Volga were still in progress it was a surprising feat to launch a second major offensive at the centre of the front round Rzhev. Stalin displays a trait characteristic of Russian strategy since the days of Kutuzov and the Napoleonic invasion. He is capable of waiting with interminable patience, retreating till the enemy supposes that he can do nothing else, sacrificing his own population the while, but at last he strikes with unsuspected reserves. It is harder to do this to-day than it was then. Technically aerial reconnaissance renders surprise difficult: morally it was one thing to abandon villages and towns to a French occupation and quite another to leave them to the mercy of the Nazis. Mr. Churchill in his brilliantly phrased broadcast on Sunday evening disclosed the fact that Stalin had these plans prepared last June, if not earlier. The attack in the centre is more than a diversion, important though it is in that aspect. If it succeeds it will win for the Russians a long stretch of the Moscow-Riga railway, of the first importance in any further advance westwards. Rzhev is a pocket which looks so improbable on the map that one wonders how the Germans can have held it for so long against many attacks, but it is strongly fortified. The Russians are doing well here, but prophecy would be risky. Stalingrad, meanwhile, is now thoroughly encircled: inside it the Russians are gaining ground and they are also advancing south-west along the railway towards Kotelnikovo. But the Germans, as was to be expected, are rallying here, and fewer prisoners are being taken.

In Africa the Eighth Army is still coping with its difficulties of communication before assaulting Rommel's strong defensive position at El Ageila. Like our own at El Alamein it cannot be outflanked, save, perhaps, by a nearly impossible circling movement through the desert. Benghazi is already or soon should be in full use as our port of supply. The news of the doings of the First Army is scanty, but it is driving a wedge between the enemy's two main positions, Tunis city and Bizerta. He is thought to have about 20,000 men, including some pro-Axis French troops, but his main advantage is his strength in the air, drawn from Sicily. There is little reliable news of the movements of the other force, chiefly American, which is crossing the sparsely-peopled interior of Tunisia rather slowly to reach the coast about Gabès. It should by now be near its objective. The coast is thought to be weakly held, chiefly by Italians who reached it from Tripolitania. This movement when completed will open a second front against Rommel from the West.

The suicide of the French fleet is a staggering event, defying the commonplaces of pity and praise. This action, above all, the sacrifice of the captains who shared the fate of their crews and went down with their ships, illustrates the political confusion which strangles the will of this nation. It may be true that these ships could not have escaped at the last moment with much chance of success, but could they not have done so in the first twenty-four hours after the Germans entered the then unoccupied zone? It is to be inferred that while they were determined that their ships should not fall into Nazi hands, they were equally unwilling to range them on the side of the United Nations. This is suggested by the conduct of the four submarines which did get away. Three went to Algiers but one chose to be interned in Barcelona. To this confusion Admiral Darlan is still contributing. He claims to be the sole representative of French Government, deriving its sovereignty from Marshal Pétain, whose "power" and sovereignty are derived from Hitler. In other words, what we have set up in Africa is a Fascist régime, which claims to be the legitimate government of the whole of France. This does not look like the "temporary" arrangement it was said to be. The military advantages won by recognising Darlan were considerable, but the suspicion lingers that the representative of the State Department, Mr. Murphy, who arranged the terms, had longer views than the soldiers. An influential school of thought in Washington had always nursed Vichy, as it nursed Franco, because it regarded Clerical Fascism as the ideal solution for the Latin countries. The title Darlan has assumed means that he claims the right to be the *de jure* government also of European France when it is liberated—doubtless with the help of his army. Out of provisional Fascism can come nothing but permanent Fascism—or civil war. Those who are excusing this arrangement forget that this double traitor has been for two years the villain of all our propaganda to French listeners. What the French will never forget is that he is the man who personally selected the hostages shot by the Nazis at Nantes. As yet no statement has been forthcoming that Mr. Roosevelt's "requests" have been fulfilled—the cancellation of the anti-Semitic decrees and the release of all prisoners including the Spanish Republicans and the men of the International Brigade. Why is that delayed? Is it because Franco might take offence?

Mr. Churchill's warning to Italy and his cheerful announcement that North Africa is "not a seat but a springboard" has taught us to hope for an early forward movement against the Peninsula. Washington considers the situation there "explosive" and hints at a possible revolt in the army. Does that mean that it has got an Italian Darlan in its pocket? Over that, given the Algerian precedent we have the right to feel uneasy. French traitors may in a purely military sense be worth buying, for Frenchmen, however shady, can fight. But Italians? Mr. Churchill has recently twice used the word "Fascism" in a tone of hostility. That was a notable advance. But he still harps on the note "one man." That may be an effective rhetorical trick, but it may mislead him and others. Mussolini was as much as Hitler the tool of a reactionary class. Big industrialists subsidised him at the start: the younger middle-class were his blackshirts: the Church became the firm foundation both of his tyranny at home and of his aggressions abroad. Nothing would be gained either for the crushed Italian workers or the fettered Italian mind by the fall of "one man," if a pro-British régime under the same Clerical and propertied guidance were to slide into his shoes. One Darlan is too many.

Liquidating the Empire

We have before us a batch of Indian daily papers for the early part of September. Column after column is packed with the news of the revolt and the repression, in dry, brief paragraphs, for nothing but the matter supplied by the semi-official agencies may be printed. On this evidence the activities of Congress are, or in this period were, by an overwhelming proportion non-violent. The offences punished by lathi charges, imprisonment and fines were chiefly the holding of meetings, processions, peaceful picketing, the shouting of slogans and hoisting flags. For writing slogans in the sand three girls were sentenced to two months' imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 100 or another month. Some of the sentences for nominal offences of this kind were even more severe. Given the poverty of Indians the fines were often crippling. As in 1930 women, including students, play a great part in these demonstrations. In one instance the police charged a procession of schoolgirls with canes. Two sentences of flogging were reported. Ten men were sentenced to flogging at Cawnpore for "assault," which may have meant that they had defended themselves against the police. Two students of Loyola College, Madras, were sentenced to flogging for having stones in their hands which they may have intended to throw at a passing train. Three editors were arrested for publishing news other than that furnished by the semi-official agencies. The outstanding news was the infliction of collective fines, Nazi-fashion, on villages and towns for Congress activities. In every case Muslims were exempted. On one day in villages round Madras these fines totalled Rs. 235,000. One little town, East Khandesh, was fined Rs. 30,000. The cases of serious violence were not numerous—two or three instances of arson and one of destroying sleepers on the railway. We have reported the punishments for disloyalty. It remains to report the reward of loyalty. The Raja of Kallicote, who wished to travel from Cuttach to Delhi to attend the National Defence Council, had reserved a first-class carriage. Three "European gentleman" appropriated it and physically prevented him from entering it. The station master was powerless to deal with them. If "European gentlemen" treat a reigning prince in this way, how do they treat their coolies?

Toulon

The heroism of Toulon makes one understand the spirit in which Wordsworth wrote his famous lines about the French Revolution. It was like seeing a prisoner hack off his chains. He is wounded in the flesh; but there is a spiritual triumph in the wounds which makes him a free man. This is the end of the France of Pétain and Laval, the France which lived by denying the Magna Carta of her history—the French Revolution. Now, it is to be hoped, we shall bestir ourselves, alike in Washington and London, to make it clear beyond any doubt at all that the France for whose liberation we are concerned spoke with the voice of Blum in the Riom trial, with the voice of Herriot in the great letter to Pétain, and that it need not fear betrayal to Darlan any more than it need fear that we shall permit any soldier to decide its destiny. Toulon was, in one sense, a bitter tragedy for French pride. But it rings down the curtain on the fourth act with a splendid challenge; and one can count with confidence on a fifth act which amply revenges the two years and a half of insult and humiliation. The French people are alive again. That was essential to the victory of civilisation.

Post-war Reconstruction

The Labour Amendment to the Address has produced our first fruitful debate on peace aims. Mr. Pethick-Lawrence asked for concrete evidence of the intention to carry out the Atlantic Charter. Mr. Greenwood's speech ranged from immediate post-war relief for the occupied countries to development of the world's resources for the economic good of all. Mr. Eden was as usual full of admirable and eloquent generalities, but careful not to commit himself or the Government to anything concrete. Sir William Jowitt made the most definite Governmental speech on post-war policy yet heard. He set aside the Beveridge Report for further study, but apart from it postulated a continuation of controls after the war, and prevention of currency inflation. After the boom years which should follow upon post-war demands the Government meant to implement large schemes of capital construction in order to keep employment steady; also—and here Sir William swung into line with Wallace of the Americans—the standard of living throughout the world must be improved. Both freedom from aggression and higher standards of living must be built upon the United Nations system; and the Government were ready to discuss the detailed application of the Atlantic Charter with our Allies, and to open a new era of world trade. He himself presided over a Ministerial committee which was working on schemes for reconstruction and there was an inter-allied committee for European relief, which included the Dominions and the United States. The Ministerial committee had passed the Scott and Uthwatt Reports to the War Cabinet. The only positive action of the Cabinet to be announced is its intention to set up a new Ministry of Town and Country Planning. This is merely a new piece of machinery and its title is ominous. What is wanted is a Central Planning authority, with the requisite powers to put into operation a policy and national plan covering not merely "town and country planning" in the narrow sense, but the reconstruction of town and countryside, agriculture, location of industry, transport, and the movement of population. It must be able to put this policy into operation through the various Ministries involved. It is clear that the Government has not yet begun to make up its mind upon a policy, and when—if ever—it does so, it is improbable that the new Ministry, with its limited title, will be given the necessary authority to co-ordinate and control the various departments which will be concerned.

Rubber and its Substitutes

The Rubber Control has been subject to a great deal of criticism already; and this criticism is reinforced by the report on the rubber situation just issued by the Supplies Committee of the Parliamentary Labour Party. In brief, the charge made is that the Rubber Control of the Ministry of Supply is still dominated by one firm—Dunlop's—and that the steps taken to develop the production of reclaimed rubber in this country and to enforce the use of debased rubber substitutes wherever practicable are still entirely inadequate. The shortage of rubber supplies in the Soviet Union, in view of the destruction of a large proportion of the plant available for making synthetic rubber, means that Great Britain cannot rely on the quantities of synthetic rubber from the U.S.A. on which the existing programme of production was based; and this throws into relief the fact that provision for the use of reclaimed rubber is still greatly behindhand in this country. The Labour Party's Committee proposes an entire reconstruction of the Rubber Control, so as to remove the stigma of being in effect dominated by a single firm, and the enforcement of more severe standards of debasement in the use of rubber, both in the Services and in industries dependent on rubber supplies, such as cable manufacture and the production of roofing materials. It is too late now to set about the establishment here of a large-scale industry designed to produce rubber from coal, and it is obviously better to import rubber produced from oil than to attempt its manufacture in Great Britain. But to admit all this serves only to emphasise the need for developing rubber reclamation to the highest possible point; and as long as Dunlop's dominate the Control it will be difficult to dispel suspicions that this type of production is being damped down for fear of post-war consequences. The Rubber Control is, of course, only one example of a very prevalent tendency for the Ministry of Supply's Controls to be closely identified with the leading capitalist interests in the industries concerned. But it happens to be an example of key importance at the present stage of the war.

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Big Monopolies and Small Firms

The National Union of Manufacturers is not a very important body; nor is Sir Patrick Hannon a person of whose opinion much notice need usually be taken. But Sir Patrick's criticism of the manifesto recently issued by the 120 leading industrialists is distinctly worthy of notice, because he and the N.U.M. represent a large section of the smaller industrialists who were not consulted when the "big 120" drew up their document. In general, the big firms, such as I.C.I., Unilever, Stewarts and Lloyds, Vickers, and the big motor concerns are quite prepared to accept considerable developments in the social services and to welcome a forward policy in education, provided that at the same time they are allowed to go their own way towards monopolist control. The smaller industrialists, on the other hand, are afraid of increased social service costs and actually find it much harder to reduce the use of juvenile labour or to arrange for daytime release of young persons for further education. What the monopolist can afford and may find actually remunerative when it improves the quality of his labour supply, the smaller industrialist subject to competitive conditions can welcome only when he manages his business with exceptional efficiency. The consequent rift in social policy between the big concerns and the small is likely to prove of great political importance. The Trade Unions, seeking improved labour conditions and better educational opportunities, find it much easier to come to terms with the big monopolies than with the general run of smaller firms, and are consequently apt to favour the big business interests when they clash with those of the smaller firms. In the last resort, however, such an attitude cannot possibly benefit more than a fraction of the working class; for, even if the monopolies are ready to share profits with their employees, monopoly profit must come from somewhere, and that in practice means that a large part of it must be extracted from the workers who are not in privileged employment. Yet the workers cannot possibly find allies in the smaller capitalists, who are induced by their inferior bargaining position in the market to be less liberal in their treatment of labour. The result is a curiously tangled situation, in which Trade Union leaders find it difficult to follow a coherent policy. Sir William Jowitt's new joint committee of Trade Unionists and employers, nominated by the T.U.C., the F.B.I., and the British Employers' Confederation, will hardly mend matters; for in view of the composition of the F.B.I. and the B.E.C., it is bound to be dominated by the point of view of big business rather than small. Yet, for the Trade Unions, the most vital question is that of finding a *modus vivendi* with the small and middling employers; for, whereas big business can be fairly simply nationalised or made amenable to public control, private enterprise can hardly be superseded over the area dominated by small-scale, competitive industry.

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SOCIAL SECURITY

Social Security ranks high among the peace aims of ordinary men and women. It has, in the last resort, one necessary foundation—security of income. Many things besides this are important; but what people want, more than anything else, is to be sure that neither in employment nor in unemployment, neither in ill-health nor in old age, will they or those who depend upon them be allowed to suffer want. They desire, moreover, to possess this security in the form of money which they can spend freely as they think best, and not in the form of maintenance in kind; and for this security they are quite prepared, up to a point, to pay. Indeed, as matters stand, probably most of them prefer to be called upon to make payment; what is paid for, even if it is not paid for in full, is regarded as coming by right, and not as a dole. The desire to receive as of right carries with it, in most people, an intense dislike of any means test, because a means test is regarded as a denial of right. On the other hand, the system of paying by deductions from wages, made by the employer, which was once denounced by Mr. Belloc as the hall-mark of the "Servile State," is not resented: it has come to be almost universally accepted as the cheapest means of collecting contributions. Employers, as well as employees, have got used to stamp-licking, and no longer object, as they once did, to the "tax on wages" which they, equally with their employees, are required to pay. Stamp-licking has become a national habit; and there is no large body of opinion that proposes to go back on the system of contributory insurance which Mr. Lloyd George borrowed from Germany thirty years ago.

This is highly convenient for politicians of all parties; it has made possible a much more rapid development of the social services than could have come about in any other way without violent political conflicts. It facilitates the financing of social security measures largely by lateral redistribution of incomes between persons of the same social class, and thus renders acceptable a method of paying for social services which would be denounced as "repressive taxation" if it were regarded as taxation at all. True the State has had, from the early days of "*9d.* for *4d.*", to gild the pill by making a contribution of its own, out of the proceeds of general taxation; and the broad tendency has been for an increasing proportion of the total cost of all social services to fall on the State. But the politicians have always been in the happy position of being able to offer in benefits a sum greatly exceeding the cost falling on the Exchequer, and at the same time greatly exceeding the sum directly payable by the beneficiaries as a group. This has caused them, when in doubt what to offer as a bribe to the electorate, to "plug" social services much more readily than they would have done if the Chancellor of the Exchequer had been called upon to foot the entire bill.

This is the background against which we have to study the proposals embodied in Sir William Beveridge's long-awaited report; for he has taken full advantage of the chances which this situation presents. One can imagine Sir Kingsley Wood, as he read the report, heaving a sigh of deep relief at the smallness of the bill he will need to meet in order to finance a very comprehensive measure of social security dealing not inadequately with most of the really essential needs. A mere bagatelle of £83 millions—what is that to one who has been thinking in thousands of millions for several years past? Yet that is all, and perhaps more than all, Sir William Beveridge proposes to let him in for—in the first year. No doubt, over the following twenty years, as a result of the new system of retiring pensions, there will be an additional bill to be met, rising to an annual figure of £161 millions (*plus* the £83 millions) at the end of the period. But this probably worries the Chancellor a good deal less than the amount he will be asked for in the earlier years of the scheme. "In the long run," Lord Keynes said once, "we are all dead"; and the Chancellor is probably well prepared to let his successors solve the problem of liabilities which will not accrue in his time.

It was very ingenious of Sir William Beveridge to arrange his scheme in this way. In view of the changing age-structure of the population, any system of old age pensions based on a living standard is bound to be increasingly expensive for as far ahead as we are able to see. Even to-day the proportion of old people is so high as to make the cost of a satisfactory pension formidable. Accordingly Sir William very acutely starts his full contributions now for a pensions plan which will come fully into force only in twenty years, and is thus able to use the contributions paid for these deferred pensions to subsidise the other benefits which he proposes to provide at once in full. Of course *some* improvement in pensions is offered at once, and the full rates are to come in by instalments over the twenty years. But the ingenious device makes it possible to finance all the other proposed improvements in the social insurance services without immediate additional cost to the State, which will thus need to bear at once only the cost of the proposed scheme of children's allowances—which is, incidentally, on a higher scale than most people expected it to be, though it omits the first child, except where the parent is ill or out of work.

It is impossible, in the space of a brief article, to summarise Sir William Beveridge's proposals, or even the most important of them. All that can be done is to comment on them in general terms; and in the main these terms cannot be other than highly favourable. If Sir William gets his way there will be for every person in this country a comprehensive medical service, including specialist and institutional service; there will be, for every normally employed person, a guaranteed income (barely adequate, but a good deal better than what now exists) in sickness, or industrial or other disability, or unemployment; there will be incomes in sickness or disability for others besides employed persons; there will be, for all, retiring pensions on a gradually rising scale; there will be children's allowances; and there will be special marriage benefits, motherhood benefits (over and above maternity benefits), and "training" benefits for those who lose their means of living and need preparation for an alternative job. In addition to all this the Approved Societies will at last disappear, and, last but not least, the State will take over funeral benefit and industrial life assurance, and the long-tolerated scandal of the exploitation of the poor by insurance companies, collecting societies, and their agents will be brought at last to an end.

This is much; and the end of the industrial assurance and approved society racket is a very important part of it. It has been proved beyond a peradventure over and over again that the State can run both health insurance and industrial assurance infinitely more economically than any private concern; and Sir William recites afresh the monstrous figures of waste involved in the present system, under which the administrative costs of industrial assurance amount to well over 35 per cent. of the premiums. The Approved Societies and Insurance Companies and Collecting Societies will doubtless be the leaders of the opposition to the Beveridge scheme, under whatever colours they may choose to fight. What is to be hoped is that the real Friendly Societies—those which possess some truly democratic character—will not be ill-advised enough to join the sinister opposition. Sir William has gone out of his way to safeguard their interests—not only leaving them plenty of scope for the continuance of voluntary sickness insurance, but also giving to them (but not, thank goodness, to the Insurance Companies) a place in the administration of the system of benefits under his proposed scheme.

Who will oppose the Beveridge plan? Clearly the Insurance interests, though it is to be hoped that many of their agents will see that the plan offers them a new and better sphere of action as the servants of the State in the new social security service. Who besides? Not the trade unions, which will, we imagine, be well content to let their own approved societies go in the interest of the whole working class. Not the Labour Party, though it may wish that a higher proportion of the cost had been put from the beginning on the taxpayers, and less on the insured contributor. Not, we feel sure, the main mass of those who will be called upon to contribute, formidable as a weekly contribution of *4s. 3d.* for a man and *3s. 9d.* for a woman may at first sight appear. Not the big employers, or most of them, though they also will have a considerably increased contribution to face. But many of the smaller employers will probably be hostile—even a proportion of those who stand to gain substantially in security from the new medical and other benefits with which they are to be endowed.

The great question for the immediate future is: Will the Tories swallow the scheme? The likeliest guess would seem to be that, in the main, they will, but that they will try to whittle it down. There will be, no doubt, the usual noises from the more idiotic Tory "Right"; but it will be under cover of those noises that the real Tory debate will proceed. This, one fancies, will turn not so much on Sir William's proposed scales of benefit as on the expediency of rallying to the defence of the powerful vested interest which he has ventured to attack. The representatives of that interest are already very active, trying to make out that Sir William is in the pocket of the trade unions, and no doubt telling Tory M.P.s that if the insurance agents turn against them they will be down and out. The Tories will probably try to preserve the vested interest of industrial assurance, and the approved societies with it, if they dare. But Sir William's case is so overwhelming that they may not dare, if the Labour Party and the untied publicists are sufficiently vocal and determined on the other side.

In general there is not the smallest doubt that the Beveridge plan is worth backing through thick and thin. It would be easy to pick holes in it, especially in respect of its financial provisions. But what fundamentally matters is that it lays the right foundations. Sir William's proposed Ministry of Social Security, with the task of administering at last a really unified plan of social provision based on income maintenance, is what we must have if we are to build aright; and it is not the least of the scheme's merits that it brings into this unity workmen's compensation, so long the most inequitable of all the social services, as well as the insurance and assistance services in a narrower sense. The conception is bold and eminently constructive; many of the details are tentative or unworked-out. It is for the broad plan as a whole that we must fight, and for the prompt creation of an instrument for marking out the details in the right way, and putting as much as possible of the plan into operation not after the war but as nearly as may be now.

Yet, as Sir William himself reminds us, social security, as it is envisaged in this report, is by no means everything, or even the greater part of what is needed to give every household a tolerable living income. It was not within Sir William's reference to deal with the wages men are to receive when they are at work, save to the extent to which children's allowances are to be regarded as affecting wages. But clearly his plans will break down unless wages are raised in the worse-paid occupations; and an all-round minimum wage law is a necessary complement to it. No less clearly will it break down unless the State follows in general economic policy a programme of "full employment," so as to reduce within manageable limits the numbers of the unemployed, and to make earning, and not living on social security benefits, the normal way of life for all able-bodied persons. We agree heartily with Sir William that, given such a policy, he is right to wish to defer, rather than to advance, the age of retirement on pension, and that Great Britain will need in the years to come the active services of everyone who is able to do useful work. But "full employment" will not come of itself. The conditions for it will have to be control; and success or failure in counting them will have even greater effects on the real security of the people, than any scheme of "social security" that could possibly be worked out Sir William fully recognises this, and makes it the main point of his highly effective peroration. It is now up to the Government not only to accept the essential principles of his report and give us at once a Ministry of Social Security to apply them, but also to pledge itself firmly to a "full employment" policy and give us a Ministry of Economic Planning. also to make ready for the labours of peace.

THE CIVIL SERVICE AND THE FUTURE

Last week's debate in the House of Lords on the Civil Service rather skirted the problem than boldly grappled with it. The usual criticisms were made of the recent advance in the status of the Permanent Secretary of the Treasury, and Lord Simon made the usual reply that all was in essence all that it should be. Even Lord Hankey, who speaks from so long and so rich an experience, did not do more than urge the importance of ministerial responsibility and the necessity of reorganising the Treasury as an organ fitted to control the machinery of government from the angle of administration rather than from the angle of finance.

Lord Woolton, who made the final speech for the Government, was insistent upon the need not to discourage the Civil Service, and suggested that it was not in a very happy frame of mind. But it ought not to be in that happy frame of mind. No one who compared its record in the present war with its record in the last is likely seriously to argue that the achievement is of a kindred quality. No one, either, who thinks of the planned society into which we are moving is likely to think of the present service, either in structure or in personnel, as fitted to the tasks of planning. The Service has, no doubt, the great merits of incorruptibility and precision of mind. It has not sought to make itself an independent factor in the State; its service to Labour ministers was as loyal as its service to their opponents. All that Lord Addison and others said on this head is amply deserved. But it does not go to the heart of the problem. If the heads of the Service were loyal to Labour members, we must remember that the test of assistance in innovation to which they were subjected, whether in 1924 or 1929, was not really very severe. No one ought really to congratulate the Treasury for carrying out, under Philip Snowden the historic principles of Gladstonian finance of which it was itself very largely the originator.

The difficulties most observers feel as they watch the Civil Service in operation are likely to lie in different realms. It is the narrowness of the conceptions which have underlain the advice it has tendered to ministers, its inability to awaken zeal in its own mind for large-scale experiments, the absence of that enthusiasm for experiment which, from 1906 to 1914, were all destructive of its spirit, which cause alarm. There is an absence of imagination, a tendency to assume that the Departmental view is part of the order of nature, a public-school kind of loyalty to a procedure invariably tender to vested interests, which has made the tempo of the Civil Service mind far from adequate to the problems it has confronted. It has known little of foreign experience, and, in general, has been aloofly condescending to it. It has done little to educate its members, little to discover the talent in the lower grades, little to develop that Whitleyism which, in 1919, seemed to offer the possibility that the Civil Service would set a mode for industry in the development of effective principles of democratic government in industry.

The years between 1919 and 1942 do not reveal in our officials any profound grasp of the new age into which we are moving. India, the colonies, the provision of the statistical evidence upon which the new age can build its charter housing, insurance, town-planning, the treatment of crime, in none of these realms was there any attempt at inventiveness. The old routine was largely continued, even if at a new pace. There were no new techniques. There was little effort to find new sources of personnel. It was accepted as axiomatic that the principle of open competition was the last word. The Service, in brief, has lived on the capital of the original Benthamite endowment too long. It is time that its first principles, both of structure and function, were re-examined. The debate in the Lords does not suggest that this re-examination appears as a need either to Ministers or their advisers.

The Civil Service, of course, shelters its failure behind the sacred doctrine of ministerial responsibility. But though the character of successive governments since 1919 has, no doubt, greatly influenced the habits of the Service, we must not forget that the great permanent officials are rather collaborators of Ministers than their subordinates, and that it is the very exceptional statesman who is able to dominate his officials. What has been disturbing is that even the zest for new ideas has, for the most part, been met with hostility in Whitehall. Compare the Board of Education in 1914 with the Board in 1942, and the regression in quality is obvious. The town-planning department of the Ministry of Health has been a pretty abysmal failure. It took riot and rebellion in the West Indies to awaken the Colonial Office to inquiries it ought to have undertaken long before. The notable coldness of the Foreign Office to the League of Nations was typical of the Whitehall attitude to all significant innovation.

None of all this will be altered by discussions of the exact limits within which the Treasury must move, nor even by the adoption of such interesting proposals as those put forward by the Fifty-Sixth Report of the Select Committee on National Expenditure. The war is going to produce a new society, whether it be better or worse than the old, it will at least be different. And we shall require a new Civil Service to cope with the issues it will raise. We wish there were more evidence of a realisation of this in Whitehall, above all, in Downing Street. If we are to make experiments proportionate to our problems, we need to set about finding the men who are anxious to make them. And that is likely to require an attitude of mind as vital and as determined as the disciples of Bentham brought to the post-Napoleonic age. It is not easy to discern that attitude in our Civil Service to-day.

THE L.C.C. AND WOMEN DOCTORS

Seventy years have passed since Elizabeth Garrett Anderson finally persuaded the authorities that she should be allowed to enter the medical profession, yet brilliant women students anxious to become doctors are still denied this right in London, the centre of medical treatment and research. It is more surprising that it is the London University, with its democratic traditions, which is discriminating against students on account of their sex, and failing to provide facilities for training which are available in most provincial universities in the country.

Why is this? Have women medical students proved themselves stupid and unreceptive? Or have women doctors been rejected by the community and joined the ranks of the unemployed? The academic records will answer the first part of the question. Women have claimed a large share of the prizes and awards in proportion to their number. The very fact that there is an ever-growing demand for medical education among women answers the second part. There is certainly no unemployment among women doctors, for all the old prejudices against them are rapidly disappearing, particularly in London. They are preferred to men in maternity and child welfare clinics, and are even accepted in mixed general practices.

Although London has welcomed women doctors, and is now suffering from a shortage of medical personnel, the University has attempted to restrict the supply. Professor A. V. Hill pointed out in a letter to the *Times* that during the academic year 1940–1941, of the 5,265 students of medicine and dentistry in the University of London, 11.7 per cent. were women; three-fifths of the women were at the Royal Free Hospital, and of the 4,890 students in the other schools, only 5 per cent. were women. In the remaining universities of Great Britain 21.4 per cent. were women. From this it is apparent that the potential women medical students in London are either having to go into the provinces or renounce their medical ambitions, because the majority of the London medical schools, constituent bodies of the London University, refuse to admit them.

In view of the limited accommodation, the West London Hospital applied to the London University in 1937 to be recognised as a school providing clinical instruction for women students. But the Senate would not increase the number of schools sharing in the Treasury grant, and avoided the difficulty by adopting the expedient of admitting the West London Hospital as an approved institution on the external side of the University, thus depriving a new women's medical school of very necessary financial support.

It is encouraging to observe that the recently formed British Medical Students' Association resolved at its inaugural meeting to approve the principle of the admission of women to all medical schools on equal terms with men. There has never been any real evidence that men and women could not work together harmoniously in the school and hospital wards. In fact the Committee on the Medical Education of Women Undergraduates which was set up by the Senate of the University of London in 1928 reported that the relationship between the men and women students did not in any way interfere with their co-education and no difficulties had arisen in this respect in any of the schools. Unfortunately, although this report was approved by the Senate, it has not been given full effect.

What, then, is the opposition based on? The most curious reasons are advanced for this discrimination. It has been said that men do better at sports in schools which exclude women. It has even been suggested, in spite of the 1928 report, that women have a demoralising influence, and that men are less likely to attend to their studies if they are distracted by the presence of members of the opposite sex. These arguments surely cannot be taken seriously in view of the fact that men students have always worked in the wards with nurses, and the marriage rate between medical students and nurses in those schools which do not admit women students has always been fairly high.

I think Mr. Aleck Bourne, who also contributed to the recent correspondence in the *Times* on this subject, revealed the ugly truth. The fact is that women students do not prove to be a good economic proposition to their teachers. Physicians and surgeons who teach in our voluntary hospitals depend for their livelihood on fees from private patients sent to them by general practitioners in need of a second opinion. It is quite natural that a general practitioner will recommend the consultant whom he has known and respected in his student days.

Now women doctors are inclined to be attracted to the Public Health services rather than engage in private practice. And some of those who marry cease to practise. On the whole therefore, from the consultant's point of view. it is more remunerative to fill the medical schools with men rather than with women students.

If the recommendations of the London County Council on medical education are accepted, these considerations cannot arise, for the teachers attached to the municipal hospitals would be debarred from private practice. The report of the London County Council makes a most important contribution to the whole subject.

Recently an Inter-Departmental Committee appointed by the Minister of Health and the

Secretary of State for Scotland was set up to inquire into the organisation of medical schools, particularly with regard to clinical teaching and research. The London County Council, as a major Health Authority and the largest civilian employer of medical staff in the country, was asked to submit a memorandum. This has immediately disproved the argument advanced by those who have maintained that there are not facilities in London for teaching a larger number of women medical students.

The London County Council Health Service includes a hundred or so hospitals of all types, including general, special, and mental. There is an abundance of clinical material, and the staff has experienced physicians and surgeons available, who are among the most highly qualified men and women in the country. Already the L.C.C. has affiliated some of its general hospitals with those of the teaching hospitals, and provides instruction for students in obstetrics, fevers, psychiatry, and venereal diseases. These arrangements were made in the years preceding the war. In some cases the teaching hospitals made extensive use of these opportunities, but in one or two old prejudices still prevailed, and the students were denied these advantages.

Now the L.C.C. surveys the whole field and makes far-reaching suggestions. It offers to co-operate with the teaching hospitals, and provide all the facilities for medical education. Furthermore—and to many of us this is the most striking part of the report—these facilities are offered *to men and women equally*. This finally disposes of all the arguments advanced by reactionary individuals, who would confer upon men the exclusive right to a medical education. We now await action by the Ministry of Health to implement these proposals.

EDITH SUMMERSKILL

AN AMERICAN DIARY

WHY anyone should want to leave the lights (only slightly dimmed) and warmth (central heating) of the United States for this shabby and blasted island, I leave to the professors of Psychomorality to explain. It is a fact that after completing the month which I intended to stay in the United States I chafed at every additional day of good company, good food and good news. When I heard that Canterbury had been bombed and I not there, I was positively indignant. Missing the church bells made me as home-sick as a schoolboy. But the supply of magic carpets, one of which whisked me to the States overnight, had become in November miraculously dried up. I rubbed all the Aladdin lamps available, and at last one of the genii did the trick, not as briskly as in early October, but still well enough to get me back before all I had learned became stale.

* * *

It is a staggering experience to arrive on Fifth Avenue for lunch when you sup the night before on this side of the Atlantic. The war seems wonderfully remote. The Sunday edition of the *New York Times* still weighs 4½ lbs., and though taxi cabs and private cars have been cut down to save rubber and petrol, the streets are still infinitely impressive with their solid phalanx of fast-moving vehicles. A superficial impression is that nothing much has happened, except that among the sporting events the Yanks now play the Japs instead of the Giants. But that is very superficial. I do not mean because there are no longer neon lights on Broadway, or because a siren goes at 12 o'clock on Saturday to remind New York of the realities of war. I do not even mean because you can only get one cup of coffee on a railway train, and because there are the faint beginnings of rationing of sugar and other commodities. No, you only discover that America is really in the war when you go to Washington, where people work unreasonably long hours and then, when you move about the country and see the vast new factories, many of them involving the transference of tens of thousands of workers, when you discover that all airplane places across the continent are used by people with high priority, and that you must book up early even to get a place on a streamline train to the Far West. Everywhere you go people are talking about man power; how big will the American army be? America is getting into uniform and that seemed to be what the war mainly meant to most of those I talked to on the way through the Middle West across the Rockies, and down on the Pacific.

* * *

When I arrived in October I was everywhere asked about two topics. First, India, and secondly, the Second Front and the need for a combined strategy of the United Nations. On the latter topic, I knew, of course, that an attack was brewing in West Africa, but I had no conception that it would be so large or so well organised and that it would coincide with the successful push against Rommel. This secret was superbly kept, all the better kept because so many people had an idea of what was going to happen and yet were deceived about its scope. For the first time the British and Americans succeeded in North Africa in applying Hitler's technique. Many people knew that Hitler would attack Denmark and Holland in 1940, and perhaps Norway. Yet when the attack came its force and speed produced all the elements of surprise. Mr. Churchill and Mr. Roosevelt brought off a similar coup.

* * *

I will leave to another occasion to discuss the part played by India in bedevilling Anglo-American relations at the moment. Censorship prevents the British public having any idea how strongly Americans feel on this topic. Of course, much of the criticism is ignorant; British Liberals are often driven into a defence of the Empire by critics who say nothing of America's own coloured question, which is, in my view worse than Britain's, and who do not know the difference between the Empire and the Commonwealth, and who talk as if the Indian problem would be solved by the British quitting India. I found myself reminding critics that their objection to our not "quitting India" was only exceeded by their annoyance when we did quit Burma. But in truth Britain's failure in India is a terrible thing and the temptation to react against ill-informed criticism and avoid the reality behind the criticism must be resisted. British High-ups here are, I'm sure, genuinely unable to realise the harm that is done by people who are regarded as British propagandists about India. It is nearly as great as the damage done by Mr. Churchill's speeches on the subject. (Mr. Churchill is idolised as a man and anathematised as a politician.) To do any good the Englishman must be anti-Imperialist. If he then discusses India as a factor in the war and frankly discusses not only Britain's shortcomings, but those of Congress and the Muslims and the complications of the situation, he will find Americans remarkably attentive and willing listeners. But no one who is not critical of British Imperialism speaks in America without doing harm. This goes, I think generally all over America. The exception is the small eastern sea-board Anglo-phil section, whom the visiting Englishman is only too likely to regard as America.

* * *

The "Letter to the English" which appeared in *Life*, declaring that America would not fight for the British Empire and that we should lose the war if we went on being Imperialist, because we should "lose America," made a great sensation soon after my arrival in the United States. Of course, neither Mr. Russell Davenport, who wrote the Letter, nor Mr. Henry Luce, who was responsible for it, meant to threaten, as was suggested in some places, that America would make a separate peace. Actually, the violence of the language of this article defeated its own objects, and the reactions from it were wholly to the advantage of Great Britain Intelligent Americans all disliked the *Life* Letter, because they regarded it not as fair criticism of Britain, but as a dangerous attack on the unity of the United Nations. They very naturally resented the *Life* article as a symptom of an equally dangerous American Imperialism. The author of *American Century* is a crusader, a mixture of business man and missionary, a powerful person who has become the most influential newspaper owner in the United States. Some time I will work out a more detailed comparison between Henry Luce and Cecil Rhodes—or perhaps Lord Beaverbrook.

* * *

I asked Wendell Willkie about the rumour that connected his name with the letter to England in *Life*. He explained that he first saw it when he was staying with a friend in Minneapolis after his return from Russia. Someone told him on the phone that he was likely to be asked questions about an article in *Life* and that he had better hunt it up. That was the first he had heard of it. Actually, Willkie has always been an internationalist, a League supporter, and he is not at all in agreement with the American Century idea. He told me the following interesting story. A young lady from a Government department came to see him about another matter after his return from China. She told him that the story was going round that while in Moscow he had cabled to Henry Luce about the *Life* article; this was confirmed by people in the State Department who had seen his telegram. Mr. Willkie thought it funny that stories should get out about his private telegrams; but in this case he easily understood how the mistake arose. One day in Moscow he returned about 10.30 at night from the Kremlin and was changing into heavy clothes before going up to the front when a young man came to see him, who insisted on asking for details about the inside of the Kremlin. This was a lively journalist who represented *Time* and *Life* in Moscow, and who wanted to be able to cable some background material about the Kremlin; he was the only journalist in Moscow who had found out about that particular interview with Stalin. Willkie dictated a story for him and left for the front. When he came back he found the young man waiting for him. His editor in New York had been so pleased with the material that he had sent a special request that Willkie should alter his mind and sign it. Willkie looked at it and agreed on condition that one sentence was deleted. It was his telegram to Luce agreeing to print the article with a specified deletion that had led to the mistake.

* * *

Just before Mrs. Roosevelt's visit to England I was lucky enough to be her guest at tea in the White House. I hear on all sides that her visit here was an immense success. I should have been surprised if it had not been. How anyone could have held the official position as First Lady for ten years and still have no bit of her shirt front stuffed I can scarcely explain. She is informal, interested and interesting. And yet she is one of the most dignified of human beings. You feel, as she pours out tea from a large silver teapot, that you are in the presence of royalty. She has always maintained her own individuality and runs her separate public existence. She talks with great freedom and admirable common sense. She cannot possibly write in public what she says in private, and her column "My Day," which many people in this country have now seen, is a model of banality, but it is also an extraordinary sign of an independent and vigorous personality. There is not a word in it that is not commonplace, but as it is quite simple and sincere and written from the White House, most people want to read it. The night after seeing her I took train to Chicago. Turning over our conversation in my mind, our discussion about what she might see or do in the hypothetical event of her going to England (I did not know then that she was actually leaving almost at once), I decided not only that the conversation was off the record, but there was no reason for me to display any journalistic egotism by mentioning my visit. The next day somebody placed in my hands the *Chicago Times*, an evening paper which is one of the many that carries "My Day" as a nightly feature. It was as empty of controversial interest as usual. But among other items it included my visit to the White House. As a journalist Mrs. Roosevelt beat me to it. She interviewed me. Critic

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to V. S.-W.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

A Good Omen in the Scullery ?

I set a mouse-trap (break back) and caught three mice at one setting.

It happened on the night of November 7–8, when Oran and Algiers were invaded—surely this is good omen ?—Letter in *Picture Post*.

Exp. Swineherd, C.O. but athlet. fit (tho' now no wght.-lftr owg. accid.) mst. obt. lghtr. lndwk. or hosp.). Oxon., Hons., Phil. Pol. Ecn. Sh.-tp., sec. knldge., resp. admin. exp.—*New Statesman* Advertisement.

The Two Commandments.

The first and great commandment was "to love thy God with all thy heart and all thy mind, with all thy soul and with all thy strength," the second being "to love thy neighbour as thyself." Is it not possible that the Church dignitaries are laying too much emphasis at the present time on the second commandment ?—J. E. O. (Oxford).—"Points from letters," *Sunday Times*.

Uncured ? Katherine MacDonald, M.S.F., Naturopath, absolutist, pacifist, all troubles; special tonic, 1s. 6d., including postage. Clinic, Sundays, 7 p.m. Middle aged. Popular Sat. nights, 7.30 p.m., 1s. 6d. Duke of Bedford's speech, R. Mallone's poems.—Advt. in *Peace News*.

"I do not know of any power that can compel them to wear hats in court, but I do prefer women to wear hats when invoking the name of Almighty God when taking the oath."—Mr. Justice Croom-Johnson reported in *Daily Mirror*.

FORGOTTEN MEN

"The authorities who shut up these men for their hostility to the Axis Powers are to determine whether and when they are released. . . . Mr. Eden . . . could give no answer about International Brigade prisoners."—*Manchester Guardian*, November 27th.

There was an International Brigade
Which fought for freedom with foolhardy passion,
Before the International Crusade
Became the fashion.

Their hopeless fight they fought out to the end,
Their wounds and scars their only decorations;
When they stood fast their statesmen did not send
Congratulations.

They did not die to save their native state,
Some, liberty's exiles, no State possessing,
They bled for an ideal but did not wait
The Church's blessing.

Their victories were not their nations' boast,
No war memorials inscroll their glory,
Spain's tragedy and theirs, is an almost
Forgotten story.

Forgotten, like the men now left to rot,
While freedom's champions treat with Spain's
  Dictator,
And raise to power the Vichy patriot,
A double traitor.

Because they fought too soon in freedom's war,
Though grave their fault, their fate deserves
  compassion—
Men should not fight for liberty before
It is the fashion.

Sagittarius

THE BELLS

I did not hear the church bells when they were rung the other day after a long intermission. I must have dozed off shortly before they began, and so was deaf to what most people listened to with pleasure, even if this was only because it had ceased to be familiar. If I, too, should have liked to listen, it would have been for the love of novelty rather than for the love of bells. I prefer the idea of bells to bells themselves. As a boy I would gladly have voted for their prohibition. Whether this was the fault of the church bells that rang nearest my home, or to my lack of a sensitive ear, I do not know; but I never heard them without hatred. Every Sunday morning at eleven their clangour told me that I must stay in bed no longer, but must desperately bestir myself if I wished to arrive in church not more than a quarter of an hour late. Theirs was not a gentle persuasion to worship, but a deafening and dictatorial command. One felt that one was being harried to church by a din of devils. Only when one had slipped into a back pew, hoping that one's late arrival had not been observed from the pulpit, did one relax into the divine peace of the Sabbath, disturbed by no harsher sound than the occasional cough of a woman worshipper.

Nor was the hostility of the bells limited to Sundays. Every Wednesday evening there was a bell-ringing practice that scattered pandemonium throughout the neighbourhood. For some reason that I cannot explain I always looked forward to Wednesday as the working day of the week, with a long evening in which I could devote myself to the Romans and the Greeks with their genitives and ablative absolutes. No sooner, however, did I sit down to work at my grammars and text-books than the gross cacophony of those bells beat against my eardrums with a discord that made concentration impossible. "It's no use," I would tell myself resignedly, "I can't work with this going on"; and, abandoning my labours, I would put my cap on and go out into the streets in search of some less noisy part of the city. One result of these bell-ringing practices was that I never became a classical scholar. A more astute boy might have told himself that there were other nights on which no bells rang, and might have transferred his working evening to one of these. But, though not strong-willed, I am obstinate, and, as I had fixed on Wednesday, Wednesday it must be. Wednesday or never. The bells of Saint Thomas's, and not I, were to blame for the fact that it was never.

Not once at that time, I am sure except at the coming of the New Year, did the sound of bells in town seem to me a pleasant one. Poe's word, tintinnabulation, seemed to me a just description, of most of them. There was a peal of bells that played hymn tunes in mid-week—surely a misuse of bells. But, of all noises that issue from bells, the worst, it seems to me, is the depressed note of a Sunday-school bell—the depressed note of a Sunday-school bell on a damp November afternoon. There is nothing inviting in that spiritless monotone. If all bells sounded like that, Matthew Arnold's merman would not have been forsaken.

Do not be misled by all this, however, into thinking that I dislike bells. Bells appeal at once to the imagination and the sentiment. In the country, near the sea, I have often heard a distant church bell that seemed to me as consonant with the pastoral scene as a sheep bell. In the country a bell is as much in place as on a Christmas card. There one begins to realise how right it is that its name should be one of the most musical words in the language. Possibly it was the sound of the word "bell," rather than church bells like those of my childhood, that led Poe to write the most famous of campanological poems. And what a poem "The Bells" used to seem on the lips of a good reciter! I happened to be born towards the end of the age of recitation, when "The Bells" was the ultimate test of a reciter's genius. In those days no soirée or "social meeting" was complete without a recitation. Some men recited "The Revenge," others "The Lifeboat," others "Billy's Rose." Small girls recited "The Pied Piper," and small boys "A Boy's Best Friend is His Mother," or "Have Courage, My Boy, to say No." But only the most experienced and most silver-tongued dared venture on "The Bells." My long-haired elocution master told us in class one day that there were only two men in the North of Ireland who could recite "The Bells." "I myself am one of them," he said modestly; and he named as the other the clergyman whom I had so often heard reciting it and whose voice affected me then as the voice of Forbes-Robertson afterwards affected me in *Hamlet*.

Even in the written word bells usually strike pleasantly on the fancy—bells of all kinds, from the bells on the toes of the old woman who rode a white horse to the bells of Shandon that sound so grand on the pleasant waters of the river Lee. The bells that ring and peal oranges and lemons have brought music into a million nurseries and, to the accompaniment of ding-dong-dell, pussy's fall into the well seems a cheerful incident. The bell in literature seldom sounds a jarring note. How mysterious, how doubly tense the atmosphere becomes in *Hamlet* when we reach the half line, "The bell then beating one." Later in the play Ophelia's comparison of Hamlet's disordered mind to "sweet bells, jangled out of tune and harsh," suggests more of sweetness than of harshness to the reader's ear. Even the "surly, sullen bell" of the Sonnets, far from being a surly sullen phrase, is remembered chiefly for its soothing loveliness. We may often regard the real bell with mixed feelings, but the imaginary bell, never, or hardly ever, rings in protesting ears. What an enchanted world, for example, is conjured up by Yeats's line:

"The bell buoyed up to be the waters' care."

In real life the note of the buoy-bell is by no means the happiest sound for a bad sleeper living near the coast to listen to. It is as eerie and melancholy as the cry of a night seabird. It conveys reassurance, no doubt, and warning; but it jars on the peace of midnight. To be enjoyed superlatively, it must be romanticised in words.

Even in real life, however, bells obviously give a great deal of pleasure to a great many people—especially to those who ring them. Do not think that, because you do not enjoy listening to the bells from the church tower, they are giving nobody enjoyment. To pull a bell-rope is apparently a form of blissful self-indulgence comparable to drinking a vintage wine or playing cricket. Such are the pleasures of bell-ringing that John Bunyan came to the conclusion that bell-ringing must be a sin, and he repented of his youthful passion as though it had been an outrage on the Ten Commandments. All over England you will find that bell-ringing has survived through the centuries as the secret vice of a small community—a freemasonry like that of poets and oboe-players. If you go up into the belfry of a church that takes pride in its bells you will find the names of the ringers recorded in brass as enduringly as the names of great batsmen and bowlers are recorded in *Wisden's*. Their triumphs are unknown to the general crowd; and I doubt whether the world rewards them. They are content to have their names written up in the secret places of the church to which the vulgar seldom penetrate. They are content to have been members of a village team that once beat another village team in ringing the changes. They ask no better epitaph than that, and, unlike some epitaphs, this epitaph happens to be true. They have acquitted themselves honourably in what someone once described as "the oldest of true English pastimes," and under the belfry they should, in the end, sleep well. Think of all the headings one has seen in the newspapers about bell-ringers. "Bell-ringer for fifty-six years." "Sixty-six years a ringer," and "Bell-ringer at seventy-eight: sixty years in one church." Is there any other national pastime that can boast of so many examples of a life-long love as this?

At the same time I agree with those people who maintain that church bells are rung too much in peace time for utilitarian purposes. Authorities tell us that the original function of bells, after scaring devils away, was to take part in the ritual of the service, like the prayers and the hymns, and that only later did it degenerate into the office of a striking clock, reminding worshippers that it was almost time they were in their pews. In an age in which clocks and watches were scarce there may have been a good reason for the bell's becoming a time-server. But now that everyone has a clock or watch, the church bell as a time-announcer is superfluous.

It should fill the air with the music of faith, hope and charity, like the bells of Assisi, where a man would go mad if he tried to tell the hour from the chimes. If bells were rung in this spirit I fancy they would sound more musical and less peremptory than those bells of St. Thomas's that used to afflict my boyhood with their Sunday morning imperatives. The bell of reality might become as lovely as the bell of the imagination. I have no doubt that it was in this spirit that the bells of old Russia were always rung—the bells of which Chekov in a quotation that I recently read wrote, in regard to one of his characters: “ He was a rationalist, but he had to confess that he liked the singing of church bells.”

Y. Y.

NORTH EAST INDIA AND BEYOND

[A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.]

THE rains are over, the cold weather near, and a season for campaign approaches. Some may ask what is the lie of country between the Jap army and the Bhramaputra valley. The river's name means “ The Son of God,” and many so regard it, for to many it spells life and breadth and all things. When the snows melt, and the monsoon drenches, watch it wash away the land of one and deliver it to another by a turn in its course.

The country between the valley and Burma may be likened to Scotland. The hills are higher, their ravines are steeper, their rivers are greater but the same rugged beauty haunts it all, and to travel in it is to recall familiar scenes. It is a marvel how the hill and ravine sides are timbered. One wonders what root-holds the trees have. This up to some thousands of feet high. Then the trees begin to grow moss on one side only. Then they peter out altogether, and meadows of ground orchids appear, to give place in their turn to arid grasses. There the wind cuts. At the bottom of the ravines the rivers chatter, and are never to be trusted. Even in the cold season one can climb down for hours to meet a deep gorge, not to be forded, but to be crossed by a cane suspension bridge. A tedious delay, and possibly dangerous.

During the rains the rivers and the leeches own the country. A curious contrast, but do not despise the little black threads which loop towards one by the million. There is no salt in the land except in your blood, and they must have it. You may fasten your puttees at the knee or cavalry fashion at your ankle, but the leech can circumvent either, and besides there are always the lace holes in your boots. And so at the end of a long day, when you come to change you will find a score or more of black and bloated snail-like horrors, and be proportionately weak and feverish.

So much for nature. For defence the inhabitants have also their peculiar methods. The elephant pit, furnished with bamboo stakes below sounds crude but if it will deceive an elephant it will not be seen by a Jap, and besides there is the more cunning panjhi. The panjhi is a razor-sharp sliver of bamboo, concealed in the grass, and set in the soil at an angle to meet and pierce any advancing shins. It is so made that it can go through an ammunition boot, and as for puttees they but seem to guide it to the back of your calf. In such rugged countries there are certain tracks that tempt a more rapid advance. It is there the panjhis wait. Stone chutes are also a favoured weapon. These are masses of rock, held up behind stout mats made of plaited bamboo, and held back by a series of cane ropes all leading to one. The cut of a dhao and the avalanche rushes down and sweeps all from the path. The best place for this is above where the road is made of more bamboo mats laid on stakes driven into the face of an extra steep slope. There are many such, some of crumbling shale where no road can remain long. Beware of these, and see your pickets have inspected the top of the ridge well, for on such a roadway the stone chute is at its very best. Of course every army has its artillery. So had these native ones. It showed up their courage well. The cannon were made of bamboo, bound round by strips of mithun hide. The gunpowder was local and of uncertain strength. It was compounded of the sulphur bean, charcoal, and earth from the village urine pit. The charge was telegraph wire cut and hammered into slugs. The gun was fired by powder round a touch hole, and a lighted brand. A brave man's job, and only some survived. Better generalship dictated a trip wire, and a log released by it to fall on a stolen cap, but this was not so feasible.

These may seem simple defences, but backed by the jungle craft of the Naga and Kuki supplemented by the skill of the Ghurkas, they may embarrass any ordinary advance. Especially so when the advancing troops have been exhausted by the relentless up and down toil the deep ravines compel. An advance of a mile or two may take twenty-four hours, and no force is at its fighting best when clinging to a precipitous slope. Toll taken there ought to be heavy. As the trees give concealment from above, and a country which will hardly support mules is worse for motors, I cannot see where modern equipment will come into its own.

MY UNCLE WAS A BANKER

HE had wide open, excited brown eyes; he was not a big man, but in battle-dress he was quite imposing. The hall was crowded and the band was noisy. We met in a Paul Jones.

“ Would you care for a cigarette ?,” he asked with extreme politeness.

After that we danced. He was wearing gym shoes, and every now and then my rubber heel stuck on the floor.

“ Were you born in Canada ? ” I asked.

“ You bet. But my people are French ”—he hesitated a second—“ My father was a French count. I'm one too, really. But I don't bother about it.”

I gazed at him admiringly.

“ My uncle was a great banker in Paris.”

“ Where did he live ? ”

“ In the—Rue de la Paix.”

“ Whatever did he do when the Germans marched in ? ”

“ He got out just before.”

“ Good gracious ! Where is he now ? ”

“ In Scotland. He owns a castle and a thousand acres of grouse-shooting. I go there every time I get leave.”

“ How nice for you.”

Just here the band played double quick and there was no time for talking.

In the interval we went over to the refreshment bar.

“ I'm a rolling stone,” he said, puffing away at a Sweet Caporal. “ I know the States, Mexico, Belgium, Holland and France, Norway, Sweden and Denmark, Rumania and Hungary. Oh! and Africa. Funny how I got to Africa. One day I walked into my uncle's place in Paris and said, ‘ Hello, Uncle ! (just like that). ’ He said, ‘ My boy, I'm going big-game hunting tomorrow. Are you coming too ? ’

“ We were away six months.”

“ All over Africa ? ”

He nodded.

“ Actually I saved his life. We were hunting wild boar one day, and they get pretty nasty when they're mad. Well, one was coming for us and my uncle shot at him. *Ping!* But the gun wouldn't go off. The boar came charging through the undergrowth at us. I aimed my gun. I had only one shot and that was at the back of his ear. *Ping!* He tumbled to the ground.”

At that moment two pilot-officers came into the hall. He shot them a glance.

“ You know,” he said brightly, “ I'm only in the Army until my commission for the R.A.F. comes through.”

“ Have you done much flying ? ” I asked open-eyed.

He nodded briskly. “ I used to pilot civil craft over in the States.”

“ Why aren't you in the Air Force now ? ”

He thought for a second. “ I had a hell of a bad crash and lost my nerve. I was ferrying a plane to 'Frisco in '36 in midwinter, when ice formed on the wings. I went into a nose-dive and hit the ground at 400 miles per hour.”

“ You must have been badly knocked about ! ”

“ I was in hospital a year, and I lost my nerve.”

“ How is it you're all right now ? ”

“ Well, it was like this. I went down to Croydon where my friend, Major Hendon, works. He said, ‘ Are you coming up, Dan ? ’ I shook my head. ‘ No nerve,’ I said. ‘ Come on,’ he said, ‘ Just for a ride.’ ‘ Just for a ride then,’ I said. The plane had dual controls. I got in the back and away we went. When we were over Croydon we went into a nose-dive. The Major called through the speaking tube. ‘ What are you going to do about it, Dan ? ’ Beads of perspiration jumped out on my forehead. I stared at the stick, trying to get my hand forward. But somehow I couldn't make it. Then—click, I grabbed it and brought the plane out of the dive.”

“ And now I can fly,” he finished triumphantly.

At that moment one of the R.A.F. men passed.

“ How do, sir,” said my Canadian engagingly. “ You fly Spitfires ? Swell kites. I took one up the other day. Gee, how she could loop ! ”

I fled to the cloakroom. DIANA GARDNER

HENRY IV, PART 2

“ I fancy,” wrote Dr. Johnson about *Henry IV: Part* 2, “ every reader when he ends this play, cries out with Desdemona, ‘ O most lame and impotent conclusion.’ ” He would have preferred it to finish with the death of the King and the words, “ In that Jerusalem shall Harry die ”; and in this Johnson was the mouthpiece of eighteenth-century taste. But to the Elizabethans a discharge of ordnance, as in *Hamlet*, “ Go bid the soldiers shoot,” or, as in *The Winter's Tale*, a symphony of instruments seemed satisfying closes. Indeed, Shakespeare's plays usually come to an end a minute or two before the actual performance ceases; and about this there is a charm to which we to-day are not insensible: recall the effect on us of the clown, left alone, at the end of *Twelfth Night* and singing “ For the rain it raineth every day.” Now in *Henry IV, Part* 2, it was upon a spectacle, the royal procession, dressed in fine costumes, moving slowly across the stage to the sound of distant trumpets, that the dramatist relied to wind up satisfactorily; while Prince John's aside to the Chief Justice, as they walk together:

> “ I will lay odds that ere this year expire
> We bear our civil swords and native fire
> As far as France: I heard a bird so sing
> Whose music to my thinking, pleas'd the King.”

should usher in the theme of the play's continuation, *Henry V*.

Yet Johnson's anticipation of the reader's disappointment at the close is only too likely to be correct regarding the spectator in a theatre if the chief actor on the stage has previously failed to make the utmost of Falstaff's crushing discomfiture. This is the player's supreme moment, and, it must be said, Mr. Robert Atkins did not rise to it. He had kept nothing in reserve, for that climax of enormous deflation. There were no tricks left in his Falstaffian bread-basket. We had seen them all before—the sly cajoling glance, the soothing deprecating gesture, the blatancy that flabbergasts without convincing, the boisterous vitality that sweeps away all scruples “ like piffle before the wind.” These we had enjoyed. But we had still to see Falstaff in despair, and that, unless it were inferred from a bowed head and quick heavy stride in exit, we never looked upon. Let me remind you of the nature of this void that was not filled.

Up to the last scene our instinctive sympathies responding to the gorgeous embodiment of the old Adam in us on the stage (deep calling unto deep) have found their expression in laughter at, and with, Falstaff; then, suddenly those sympathies are constricted into pity. And recall how carefully that tremendous crash is led up to. It is prepared for in the drinking scene with Shallow and Silence when Pistol bursts in with the news: "Sir John, thy lambkin now is King; Harry the Fifth's the man." Instantly, Falstaff tugs on his boots and shouts for "any man's horses." "The laws of England," he cries, "are at my commandment. Happy are they which have been my friends and woe to my Lord Chief Justice!" At last his sun has risen. After a brief interlude showing Doll Tearsheet and Mrs. Quickly in the act of being dragged to jail (an incident typical of a pre-Falstaffian regime of law and order, soon never to recur), we are outside Westminster Abbey, waiting for the new-crowned King. And there also are Falstaff and his cronies, simmering with triumphant expectation. The few remarks they interchange vividly suggest their soaring confidence. "Do you mark the countenance that he will give me," Falstaff chuckles to Shallow. "Is he travel-stained and sweating?" That will seem but proof of headlong loyalty. "Thy Doll, and Helen of thy noble thoughts . . . is in" whispers Pistol; "I will deliver her," Falstaff with superb nonchalance replies. Trumpets bray, and down a lane of cheering people stalks composedly the youthful king; still pale from his mystical anointing in the Abbey. The wild exuberance of a burly old ruffian close to him, and above all the familiar—the all too familiar—voice, bawling, "God save thee, my sweet boy" jar intolerably on his hieratic mood. He throws a word over his shoulder: "Speak to that vain old man." "Have you your wits? Know you what 'tis you speak?" hisses the Lord Chief Justice. But there is no stopping Falstaff, who continues, "My king, my Jove! I speak to thee—my heart!" Then the King turns his white inauspicious face towards him and makes that speech, "I know thee not, old man," which so many have thought heartless, priggish, hypocritical, but Shakespeare, I am convinced, considered decorous, king-like, merciful.

After all, to keep ten miles from the royal presence till time should show the old gang were turned honest, with small pensions meanwhile to make that reformation easier, is not so harsh a sentence. But after such enormous expectations the effect of it on Falstaff—and of that stony stare from eyes he had once made dance with merriment—is overwhelming. To convey complete collapse so carefully prepared is the climax of the part, also the true ending of the play, one which saves it from flatness. How then should Falstaff listen to that cold young voice delivering judgment? Certainly not unperturbed—as Mr. Atkins did, whose Falstaff winked and leered the while, conveying to his friends it was but the dear boy's ceremonial talk. It is an error in acting to take the clue from Falstaff's *second* remark to Shallow, "Sir, I shall be as good as my word; this that you heard, was but colour" (pretence). Then he is merely at his old shifts once more to shirk a debt. No. To get full dramatic value out of the scene, he must appear broken, and his effort at resilience be a mere shadow of his wonted confidence. It is his first remark after the King has passed that is charged with significance—and with comedy, full of desolate recognition that all his golden hopes have crashed: "Master Shallow"—the consequence at once occurs to him—"I owe you a thousand pounds." To my mind's ear these words cannot be muttered too ominously, with too deep a gloom. The back of that gigantic vitality has been broken. Remember, in a minute, when the officers of the Chief Justice take him to the Fleet, he will only be able to stammer, "My lord, my lord . ."

Mr. Atkins was admirable with Doll Tearsheet on his knee (Miss Helen Cherry was, by the way a lovely Titianesque slut), and admirable when she inadvertently put him in mind of his latter end. He did not, however, by any means extract all the fun from the encounter on the field between Sir John and Colvile of the Dale. That is the stock comedy-situation of coward surrendering to greater coward. Here Falstaff should have registered in quick succession ferocious apprehension, amazed relief, superb self-confidence. For Falstaff was, of course, an arrant coward. Much subtle nonsense to the contrary has been written from 1777 onwards, when Morgann published his essay on "The Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff." Coleridge, who followed Morgann, interpreted Falstaff as pretending to be a liar and a coward "to try experiments on the credulity of mankind"! And even the more balanced Dr. Bradley argued tentatively along such lines. True, Falstaff bursts the mould of the traditional *miles gloriosus* in which he was cast. Shakespeare's characters are ever apt as Mr. Pearsall Smith once wrote "to talk themselves alive," and which of them more potently than Falstaff? In doing so they acquire inevitably the ambiguities of living creatures. But the contention of the historical school of dramatic critics is, on the whole, sound. Stage conventions must never be overlooked; Shakespeare was a great *dramatist*, therefore an expert simplifier of human nature before he was a psychologist or philosopher. What is Falstaff but an immortal bundle tied together with conventional strings of all our disreputable life-loving weaknesses and vices—and their witty tongue? A very present heed for our own precious skins in times of trouble is among the foremost of them: of course, Falstaff was a coward. That is why we laugh at him and also with him.

So vital a figure is apt not only to burst its mould, but also disrupt the proportions of a play. In what the Westminster Theatre company must forgive me for calling a scratch performance, this balance became seriously disturbed; though the dignity of Henry IV did something to restore it, and to redeem the mediocrity of the historic figures and incidents. But the performance suffered also from the prevailing defect of all hasty Shakespearean productions: a fatal propensity to put artificial animation into every gesture and intonation—in the hope of making, especially the funny scenes, go. Falstaff himself was mercifully an exception. But Shallow, Pistol and most of the others! If only they would let us hear the words, I kept saying to myself, and not rollick and roar and tumble about like that, how much more amusing they would be.

Desmond MacCarthy

TWO CONCERTS

Wigmore Hall, B.B.C. Singers and Louis Kentner

Orpheum, Golder's Green. Orchestre Raymonde. Conductor, Walter Goehr

The third of the Boosey & Hawkes concerts of contemporary music was distinguished by two of Edmund Rubbra's new set of Madrigals, Prokofieff's *Piano Sonata No.* 6, Benjamin Britten's *Hymn to St. Cecilia*, and Constant Lambert's no longer new *Piano Sonata*. The Rubbra madrigals have a certain cool beauty, and a severity which, I suspect, is of the surface only, for the harmony does not seem inherent in the nature of the themes. But at least Rubbra uses vocal polyphony with perception of its essence, instead of trying—as he does in his symphonies—to put across ideas invariably fine by means of a texture resembling plush or linoleum. His certainty of aim I regard as still unproven, for this virtue always affects harmony rather than themes—a consideration which in itself accounts, I think, for the tranquil pleasure given by Britten's *Hymn*. In listening to this limpid and exquisite music one no longer feels—as with so many contemporary composers—that here is a personality in search of a style. That the tunes are beautiful and bland might go without saying; but the deeper source of one's satisfaction lies in the absolutely consistent harmonic scheme. Britten is here as un-"modern" as Auden's charming and subtle poem allows him to be. On a basis of strict simplicity the composer can afford to pursue freedom to the limits of cleverness, opportunities for which are given and taken—especially in the *vivace* section and at the end. This feature of course matters least: what we took away with us was the sequence beginning "O dear white children." This motet fits its form as a violin its case. Within its limits it is perfect, and it made the other English works in the programme look amateurish. To criticise it for lack of depth is beside the point. Do you blame a brook because you can see its floor and hear the sound it makes? (Five of Britten's Michelangelo Sonnets, by the way, are to be broadcast at 10.30 a.m. on Sunday, December 6th, in the B.B.C. European Service.)

Modernity was, on the other hand, completely represented by Prokofieff. "Sonata" seems a misnomer for this work, which is not really chamber music at all; "concerto without orchestra" would be nearer the mark for music so large in scale, so complicated, and withal so technically difficult. The impression of dryness made by a first hearing would probably wear off with closer knowledge; certainly the slow movement is in the composer's best manner. The performance was a very remarkable feat of memory and technique.

The *Euryanthe Overture*, the "*Unfinished*" *Symphony*, Mendelssohn's *G Minor Piano Concerto*, Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder*, Ravel's "*Ma Mère l'Oye*," Chabrier's *Fête Polonaise*. What an intelligent piece of programme-making! In it one could watch the flowering of romantic music and the emergence of the new seed from the blown flower. Full marks go to Noël Mewton-Wood for his solo in the Mendelssohn. Never have I heard this charming work played with more sparkle and fluency and sense of style. The *Kindertotenlieder*, if they mean anything to one at all, belong to that small category of works of art which become part of oneself. Unfortunately on this occasion they fared ill at the hands of Ernest Urbach, whose voice seemed totally unsuited to the part. He made matters worse by a feebly emphatic, sentimental delivery, which has the same effect on Mahler as overacting has on the microphone.

This was a pity; but the rest of the concert went admirably. Walter Goehr is one of the most careful conductors at present in this country, and if the balance of his orchestra leaves something to be desired, the exigencies of war, which make a full complement of strings impossible, must be blamed.

Edward Sackville West

THE MOVIES

"Inside Fighting Russia," at the Odeon

"Inside Fighting China," at the London Pavilion

M.O.I. Films

"The Magic Fish," at the Tatler

Two films, and a third to follow, bear the austere and legendary name of John Grierson. It is a pleasure to discover that Mr. Grierson has not altogether vanished into legend, and the films themselves would have attracted attention under any name. *Inside Fighting China* and *Inside Fighting Russia* have been modelled fairly closely on the "March of Time" series. There is a voice, insistent but of a less melodramatic timbre; Time isn't in quite such a tearing hurry; in each case the subject is revolution, the birth of new culture, and a people uniting against Fascist aggression. The commentary is precise but delivered with passion, and the pictures themselves—selected from a wide field of old newsreels and documentaries—have been chosen to strike the eye as well as tell a story. Quite apart from skill in editing, much of the material will be new to English audiences. Grierson succeeds with a remarkable economy in suggesting the lapse of years and the huge areas involved; the reindeer, cotton stacks and Circassian dancers, in the Russian film, give an unusual perspective to Five Year Plans and the chimneys of Magnetogorsk. In both films the tactics of defence in depth are made vivid by a map that suddenly intrudes order on scenes of appalling terror and chaos.

A new batch of M.O.I. shorts, mostly for non-theatrical distribution, includes films about the education of school-children in farming and rehabilitation centres where disabled workers are trained to new jobs. They are very efficiently and agreeably instructional. A third film, *Tank Battle*, produced by the Army Film Unit, can be seen at the Leicester Square Cinema and gives a clear idea of what tank manoeuvres can be like—on manoeuvres. It seems rather less like "the real thing" than similar films one has seen of Russian tank manoeuvres.

Those who feel Christmas drawing near may be attracted to *The Magic Fish*. Screen fairy tales, for some reason, are rare; possibly because infants going to the pictures seek sophistication and not magic. There is plenty of old-fashioned magic in *The Magic Fish*: a talking pike who grants wishes, a princess weeping (literally) bucketfuls, a general and his men in the field seized with an uncontrollable mania to dance, winter turned into summer by a wave of the hand, the peasant hero riding on his mother's stove to the Court and back. At the Court all is luxury, imbecility and uproar, but the English commentary by Uncle Mac of the B.B.C. assures us that this Tsar is not to be mistaken for a real Tsar. This Soviet fairy tale is rich in buffoonery and photographic tricks, but lacks prettiness. It hardly makes up for the lack of a Christmas pudding or a new Disney. WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

Thirty Italian Pictures at Agnew's

This exhibition is calculated to enchant the amateur and to instruct the artist. It contains a smaller proportion of baroque pictures than the preceding shows in the same gallery. A full length portrait by Tintoretto is the largest and showiest exhibit, but this has weaknesses, particularly in the volumes of the body and right arm. Infinitely seductive is a Landscape with Figures. Though whimsically attributed to Gentile Bellini, it shows the genial influence of Giorgione. We hope this lovely work will go to some English museum. Another rather surprising attribution is the panel given to Benedetto Diana. It looks more Florentine than Venetian, and the painter in any case must have seen the work of Botticelli's final period. Antonio Veneziano, Palma Giovane, Schiavone, Mola, Tiepolo, Guardi and Bellotto are all represented by beautiful works. How happy it makes one again to see good Italian painting!

Correspondence

FLATS OR HOUSES?

SIR,—Mr. Lewis Silkin says in his letter that the results I have obtained in the discussions with members of the Forces on the relative merits of flats and houses are worthless. I wish Mr. Silkin could tell the members of the Forces that. He would be forced to remember that he is speaking to citizens, many of whom have knowledge of housing and planning, and who, judging from his letter, have given at least as much thought to the subject as Mr. Silkin. From what standpoint, it may be asked, is the opinion of members of the Forces on this matter worthless (for that is what Mr. Silkin's contention amounts to)? Is it from the standpoint of democracy?

Mr. Silkin really gives no valid reason for his view. The two he gives will not survive the most superficial examination. He says I am appealing to those who would in the vast majority of cases have had no experience of living in flats. I may say that quite a number of those to whom I have lectured live in flats in London, Liverpool, Leeds and other big cities, and though they admit in some cases they are quite good as flats, they are looking forward to the day when they can have a small house and garden. The exceptions are exceedingly rare. Such is my experience that I am convinced that if a census were taken of all the flat dwellers in this country on this question there would be a big majority preferring the house to the flat. Also, it would hardly be sound policy to build blocks of flats just to provide people with experience on which they could found their opinion, and confirm or modify their dislike of flats. There is evidence that many people in European countries who have lived in flats all their lives would prefer the small house and garden. For example numerous occupants of the flats in Vienna, which are among the finest in Europe with many of the amenities I enumerated in my last letter, have indicated that they would really prefer to live in the small houses on the outskirts of Vienna.

With regard to Mr. Silkin's second reason, though an obvious consideration is hardly relevant to the expression of preference for flat or house, but is concerned with the ability to provide houses in areas of high population density. Of course it is necessary to discuss how houses at, say, 12 to the acre for the majority of the population are to be obtained. Of course this spacious manner of living is impossible for everybody as the population is at present distributed and as industry is at present located. It is, I think, realised by all town-planners that if we are to house the people according to their needs and wishes, we must first effect a more spacious distribution of the population, which involves a more widespread dispersal of industry. Such changes would mean changes in land values, about which Mr. Silkin sees difficulties; and if the use of land is subject to public control in the general interest, according to some of the recommendations of the Uthwatt report, it would have the effect of decreasing the value of some land and increasing the value of other land. Such values are not static, but depend on the location of industry and commerce and other relevant factors.

The course is clear. The first thing in this matter is for the Government to accept the recommendations of the Barlow report and translate these into action by a National Plan for Industry. It is well to remind ourselves of two of the principal recommendations: (428 (4)) (a) "Continued and further redevelopment of congested urban areas where necessary" and (b) "Decentralisation or dispersal both of industries and industrial population, from such areas." The principal aim is, after all, for more spacious and consequently healthier living conditions for the people.

ARNOLD WHITTICK

SIR,—The arguments of your correspondents who have discussed the relative merits of flats and semi-detached houses appeared to be based on the assumption that the former are the only possible alternative to the latter. But there is a happy mean between these two extreme types of housing development, and that is the terrace of self-contained houses at a reasonably high density per acre.

A very large number of people like such dwellings. It is worth recording that in Stepney there were charming little street houses of the Regency period, now unfortunately "blitzed," for which there used to be a waiting list of never less than 500 families, many of them desiring to return to the East End from the Garden Suburbs. That modern terrace houses with bathrooms, well-planned kitchens, possibly with central heating as well, and with roof gardens to supplement the back yards, would be even still more popular was proved in an extensive house-to-house canvass undertaken by the Hundred New Towns Association in the London area. There is not the slightest reason why club houses, nursery schools and easily accessible public recreational space should not be provided in a layout of terrace houses just as well as in one of tenement blocks.

Similar houses, with somewhat larger gardens, could be planned in terrace or quadrangular formation in the suburbs, in villages and in new towns, and in the opinion of many they would represent a type of layout socially and æsthetically superior to the standardised "open development" in small detached architectural units.

A. TRYSTAN EDWARDS

The Hundred New Towns Association,
1 Broadway, Westminster,
London, S.W.1.

SOCIALIST EDUCATION

SIR,—As I believe the relation of education to the struggle for a new social order is of primary importance, I hope you will agree that your correspondents are entitled to a reply.

As for Mr. Pickstock, my letter heralds no change in the N.C.L.C.'s policy. We have always welcomed the assistance of intellectuals able to give us help, The first part of Mr. Pickstock's letter suggests that the orthodox educational institutions reflect the "class outlook of existing society." The second part suggests that the N.C.L.C. is wrong in thinking that the world to-day needs a "different kind of education." If Mr. Pickstock agrees that orthodox education is one of the bulwarks of the existing social order, he must see the need for a new kind of education. It is a well-known fact that every social system produces an education which has, as one of its main functions, the preservation of that system. That view is endorsed by the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. A week or two ago, too, Dr. H. G. Stead, the organising secretary of the English New Education Fellowship, said that "education is the machinery a society establishes for the

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purpose of initiating its young people into adult life From this definition it is obvious that the nature of the educational system will depend upon the nature of the society which establishes it. No society sets up a mode of education which will destroy itself."

It stands to reason, therefore, that before most of those who have been educated by the orthodox machine are really qualified to assist in providing the new kind of education on such subjects as Economics and History, and social questions generally, they have themselves to be re-educated, unless they've done their own re-educating.

As for an impartial approach to a subject, this raises a philosophic problem which cannot be satisfactorily dealt with in a short letter. If we assume that by "impartial" is meant scientific—a lack of bias against the truth—then I suggest that those who have contributed to socialist economic theory, the greatest of whom is undoubtedly Marx, are much more impartial than the orthodox economists who were once described by a well-known Fabian as the "chaplains of the pirate ship of Capitalism." As for a wider understanding of social problems, perhaps Mr. Pickstock will tell us what economist in the whole history of Capitalism has done more to contribute to that wider understanding than Marx.

"A. M." has misunderstood me. I did not suggest that I was satisfied that the Labour Party had adequately fulfilled its task in educating the workers in Socialism. Many prominent people in the Labour Party have made the same mistake as did "A. M." in his article. They have assumed that because of the word "workers" in front of its name, the W.E.A. is an educational organisation providing education based upon the socialist outlook. They have, therefore, encouraged workers to take advantage of W.E.A. educational facilities when those workers ought to have been equipping themselves with an education based on socialist principles and socialist theory.

The main reasons why the N.C.L.C. has had so little assistance from the intellectuals are (1) that their very training in orthodox educational institutions makes it difficult for them to see that there is something fundamentally wrong with orthodox education. (Those who become socialists often become political socialists but not educational socialists); (2) that socialist graduates often mistake the W.E.A. for a socialist educational institution; (3) work in the N.C.L.C., except for the full-time officials, is entirely unpaid work, whereas intellectuals, socialist or otherwise, who are willing to take classes under the W.E.A., have no difficulty in getting very handsome payment as a rule.

J. P. M. Millar
General Secretary,
N.C.L.C.

Tillicoultry, Scotland.

UNPROMISED ISLAND

Sir,—I have evidently annoyed that uncompromising Zionist Professor Namier by suggesting that any temporary solution to the Jewish refugee problem is tolerable other than free entry into Palestine. I do not think, and did not say, that internment was an ideal solution; I said that the Mauritius experiment was, *faute de mieux*, exceptionally praiseworthy. If the Colonial authorities will not take Jews into Palestine, I said in effect, better they should be comfortably interned elsewhere than allowed to die at sea.

From a Zionist point of view Palestine could never be too overcrowded to accept Jewish immigrants, but from the point of view of the British authorities, embarrassed by mutually conflicting claims of Jews and Arabs and harassed until recently by a difficult military situation, I thought there might conceivably be some justification for restrictions on Jewish immigration. Personally, I disapprove of all imperialism, but I do not imagine that the Colonial authorities are demons who delight in frustrating the just claims of Jewry without any good reasons.

My account of the Mauritius camp was necessarily incomplete: it was based upon material received from both internees and local residents, and this all bore out in substance the facts related in the Armitage report. I have found nothing to justify doubts about the Commandant's veracity.

Maurice Cranston

HEINRICH ADAM

Sir,—Mr. Auerbach, whose "careful investigation" did evidently not include any reference to officially published statistics of Luxembourg Labour, has exaggerated the figures of German workers in Luxembourg and has made the thoroughly arbitrary insinuation that they played an important part in the Luxembourg strike.

Since 1933, the German workers in Germany and elsewhere have had ample opportunity to prove their sympathy with those who fight for freedom. One can understand that Mr. Auerbach, as a patriotic German, may well be anxious to seize any opportunity which may present itself to prove that his fellow-countrymen are taking part in the world struggle against Nazism, but he has no justification for exploiting the patriotism of Luxembourgers for this purpose.

Victor Bodson,
Minister of Justice of Luxembourg.

REGULATION 33B

Sir,—May I thank you very warmly for your valuable comments on Regulation 33B. It has been discouraging to see that the experience of past years has been so far forgotten that there has been a general welcoming of this regulation as a measure to stem the unfortunate increase in venereal diseases which war conditions have brought.

There is one further point which I should like to emphasise: The chief factor in the spread of venereal disease is the attitude of society in condoning promiscuity. With this regulation in force a man who gives information about a prostitute from whom he has contracted disease is inclined to think he is performing a good action and to gloss over the social evil of his behaviour. This, together with the fact that the prostitute who is treated may relapse and continue to spread the disease to men who think that they have been given some protection by her certificate, marks the beginning of a policy which has notoriously failed in other countries.

There is no protection against infection by venereal diseases yet known which can be adequate under the conditions of promiscuous sexual intercourse and therefore anything that lessens the social restraints that help self-control and the maintenance of sexual morality is certain to increase the spread of venereal disease.

For this reason, together with the objections you mention, I think it should be said not only that a case for 33B has not been made out, but that the regulation is positively detrimental to the object in view.

Hilda Clark, M.B., B.S.

NATIONALISM IN THE THEATRE

Sir,—I hope it may be possible to reassure your correspondent "G. M." about our artists in "Hedda Gabler" and the programme note that all of them were of British birth.

By a queer chance, no less than three artists in a cast of seven had paid their compliment to internationalism by adopting foreign stage names. People began to ask of what nationality they were and how they learned their fluent English. The statement was therefore made solely to satisfy the audience's natural curiosity.

It would be surprising if anybody coming to the Mercury, still less its internationally minded director, should indulge "anti-foreign feeling." I have never myself met with such feeling in the theatre, and the success of foreign artists on our stage should be a proof that none exists.

Now that our foreign-sounding artists are appearing in Congreve instead of Ibsen, the note has been withdrawn. C.E.M.A., of course, had no responsibility for it.

Ashley Dukes

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

It has been my good fortune to know in France many of the men most deservedly famous for their intelligence, but I have met none in whom the virtues of the French mind are more conspicuous than in M. Maillaud. The book he has now written for the Oxford Press* contains less than 140 pages; and while the author has necessarily sacrificed much of his wit and eloquence to concision, to have compressed within this space such a mass of information and of argument is a startling intellectual feat. I urgently recommend every reader to get hold of this work, and I wish that it could be used as a textbook in every secondary school.

M. Maillaud devotes the first half of his book to an account of French civilisation, using history to illustrate the achievements, and to explain the strengths and weaknesses of the national character. In the second half he diagnoses the causes of the defeat—and he is the first writer to do this convincingly. He ends by suggesting that the future of England is bound up with that of a strong and allied France. So compendious and thoughtful a book is difficult to summarise. In his political opinions M. Maillaud, I should begin by explaining, is notably dispassionate. A republican, he proclaims that no previous regime has served France better than the Third Republic, and not only France but the world. At the same time he both celebrates the growing contribution of the Church during the pre-war period to social progress, and acknowledges that the eighteenth-century ideology of the Revolution fostered a conservative attitude to modern problems. He deplores the influence in France alike of Fascism and Communism on the ground that these conceptions are equally un-French. He is æsthetically sensitive as well as politically sagacious, and his summary of French culture is admirably proportioned. (One of the few statements in his book with which I disagree is that Balzac and Nerval were rebels against romanticism.) His supreme merit, I think, is that he invariably argues from facts, even where an Englishman would prefer to argue from sentiments. In his realism no less than in his patriotism, M. Maillaud is profoundly French.

His most controversial thesis is that Germany, lacking any common religious and cultural patrimony, has for centuries been a jumping-off ground for migrations and predatory adventures. Consequently France has always had to "live dangerously," her office being to preserve the West by preventing these nomads from forming a factitious unity for aggressive purposes. He bases this view not upon any wild theories about national or racial character, but upon history, geography and demography. It is a view generally held by Germany's neighbours, whether they are Slav, Latin, Scandinavian or Turanian. But not by most English political thinkers. After the last war the Left and the Right in this country were united in their desire to reconstitute the strength of the enemy that had so nearly defeated us. Thus we have given the French champions of collaboration with Germany a powerful argument.

> To-day even those nations who fight against Germany are merely aiming at the present German régime, but will not threaten German unity. Therefore Germany, although defeated in the field, will in any case have achieved her historical purpose. The German problem will survive in its entirety. In a period of years France will have to take up arms again and pay the same appalling tribute of blood because she has common frontiers with Germany and because she will never be supported in her contention that the only means of exorcising the German menace is preventive action dividing and limiting the power of Germany.

Therefore, say the collaborationists, let us make a new Empire of the West, to which the Germans will contribute new blood, and we French our civilisation. M. Maillaud shows the folly of this reasoning. "An alliance with a nation whose deepest motive is precisely the extermination of the very culture which the French offer as their part of the bargain is an absurdity." Nevertheless we English too easily forget certain facts.

In the last war French casualties amounted to 73 per cent. of the men mobilised, ours to only 35.8 per cent. Independently of her payments to Great Britain and the U.S.A., France spent on the restoration of her devastated territory twice as much as she received from Germany. The Germans paid less than 1.5 per cent. of their national revenue, much less than they received in credits from the Allies. To-day, on the other hand, the Germans are obtaining reparations on a scale that after the last war was considered impossible. They take more than three times the amount of a pre-war French budget besides seizing capital resources such as forests and cattle. Industry, trade and banking have been *gleichgeschaltet*. When the Germans have been expelled from France, the country will be bankrupt.

We English helped to make Germany the menace she has become, partly from a fear of Bolshevism, partly in the search for markets, above all to restore the Balance of Power. In pursuing this last aim we neglected (I am summarizing M. Maillaud's exposition) the facts of demography. With her inferiority in population France could withstand Germany only by superiority in equipment. We allowed Germany equality in arms, though her industrial production was becoming four or five times greater than that of France. Thus we invited, indeed made inevitable, our calamities. M. Maillaud does not underestimate the mistakes of the French High Command. (One of the greatest, he says, was not to perceive and explain to us years before the war that a far larger British Expeditionary Force would be essential.) With 51 divisions the French had to face over 150 German divisions. Even apart from the German superiority in tanks and aircraft, the result was a foregone conclusion. Bad generalship, bad equipment, even treachery, may have accelerated the defeat by a few days, but the cause was inferiority alike in numbers and in industrial production.

The main criticism made by M. Maillaud on pre-war French governments is extremely interesting. Almost all French politicians assumed that the existing equipoise between industry and agriculture required preserving. Rather more than half the population led rural or semi-rural lives, and many of the traditional excellences of French civilisation are indubitably the result. But M. Maillaud shows this balance to be a source of weakness. Too much man-power was spent on unscientific agriculture, which required subsidies and lowered the general standard of life: the industry on which survival in modern war depends was correspondingly starved. Only by an exodus from the land such as every French Government tried to prevent could France have maintained her status as a Great Power.

Since France has proved so weak, why, it may be asked, should we base our future policy upon an Anglo-French alliance? The answer is that we are demographically little stronger than the French, and that if we do not make common cause with them they will inevitably be driven into the orbit of Central Europe, leaving us helplessly isolated. The West would play a smaller and smaller part. Moreover France retains an immeasurable industrial potential—a people conspicuous for skill as well as great natural resources. The unbreakable spirit of the French is asserting itself more vigorously every day; and the better one is acquainted with their history the more signal one must consider their abilities, and the more necessary to the maintenance of civilisation.

M. Maillaud shows that in the intellectual and ideological chaos before the war many French citizens, though profoundly attached to moral values in their private pursuits, felt them to be less binding in public life. Seriousness, however, remains one of the fundamental characteristics of the nation.

> The earnestness of a reaper at his task from dawn to dusk, the gravity of any discussion even on matters of daily routine by the members of a French family, the extreme care exercised in the choosing of a profession by a young Frenchman even if he is beginning as an apprentice, and even such familiar scenes as a French mechanic examining an engine or a clockmaker scrutinising a watch, all these testify to the seriousness and reflection which a Frenchman applies to activities within his individual orbit. In these there are few nations which have a deeper sense of the solemnity of life.

The French have accepted two dictators, the Napoleons, both of whom, M. Maillaud considers, deviated from the realism of true French policy. But individualism has always been their characteristic. Though generally anti-clerical, they retain the Christian tradition that the basic social cell is the family. "A French workman is more conservative in his habits than in his political opinions." Capitalism in France, one might add, has been peculiarly brutal, but even the many who call themselves Communists retain a most un-Marxian attachment to the family, and often even to the sacredness of small property.

> The most highly developed sense in the French is probably their gift of sight. Physically and morally their most permanent attribute is clear-sightedness, clarity and lucidity of vision. To see "things as they are" is the great French preoccupation. Neither religious fervour nor flights of mysticism can noticeably impair this fundamental aptitude, they merely transpose it to a different plane.

To this tradition Rousseau is the great exception. His assertions "appertain to Faith." "Socially, Rousseau is a revolutionary and an innovator. Intellectually he could almost be called a reactionary in the strictest sense of the term." But from Fouquet and Montaigne to Degas and Proust the French have had a dominant gift for the critical scrutiny of mankind. This has been noticeable also in their foreign policy. When this has failed, the cause has been not optimism but logical deductions from false premises. We English, I think, could afford hitherto to be vague, because we inhabited an island. The invention of aircraft has deprived us of this advantage, and we shall not survive unless we can sharpen our sight. Even the humblest French have inherited a traditional sense of external dangers: most Englishmen lack this, and prefer not to look ahead at all. A slightly more thoughtful section is represented by Mr. Harold Nicolson's constituent who asked him to support the policy of "The League of Nations and no Foreign Commitments." And the intellectuals on the other hand incline to look too far ahead. Because we saw the evil results of Nationalism we underestimated its continuing potency. To-day there seems a danger that the extravagances of some who call themselves Vansittartites may provoke other Englishmen into a renewed complacency. Perhaps the German peoples will at least have learnt to be pacific. But if we act upon this assumption after victory we cannot expect the French, or any non-German people, again to risk an alliance with us.

Raymond Mortimer

BERNARD SHAW

Bernard Shaw: His Life and Personality.
By Hesketh Pearson. *Collins.* 21s.

It is almost impossible not to write an amusing biography of Bernard Shaw; it is quite impossible when, as in the present case, Shaw himself has given every help to the biographer. Shaw is one of the most amusing people that have ever lived. As in the case of Voltaire and a very few other men, wit and humour are not just acquirements or separable characteristics of his mind, they are part of the actual fabric of his thought, speech, and imagination. That is why wherever he goes he imposes Shavianism upon the world and its inhabitants. Some people have minds of such deeply distilled dullness that their mere physical presence can make a room full of people—indeed, the whole world—intolerably dull and boring. Shaw has the same kind of effect the other way round. Every one to whom he speaks acts in the divinely ridiculous way in which Shaw thinks. A good example of this will be found in an interview which he had with Strindberg in Stockholm and which he describes as follows:

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* *France.* By Pierre Maillaud. Foreword by D. W. Brogan. Oxford Press. 3s. 6*d.*

> After some further conversation, consisting mainly of embarrassed silences and a pale smile or two by A.S., and floods of energetic eloquence in a fearful lingo, half-French, half-German, by G.B.S., Strindberg took out his watch and said in German, "At two o'clock I am going to be sick." The visitors accepted this delicate intimation and withdrew.

Mr. Pearson has made full use of his opportunity. His biography is immensely amusing and will, if you are given that way, make you rock with laughter. And it is something more than that. It contains "revelations," it tells you everything—and perhaps even more than—you need or have a right to know about Shaw's life and character. Even the details of his sexual life and the "affairs" which were or were not consummated are given with scrupulous accuracy and documentation. They are all extremely interesting and there is little more to say than that Mr. Pearson has given us all or nearly all that a biographer can be expected to provide about a man who is, after all, pre-eminently a writer.

The pages of the biography are naturally dominated more by the man than by the writer, and of the man Shaw it would be impertinent to say more than that no one could possibly imagine a character of greater charm and generosity. A sound judgment of him as writer and thinker is far more difficult, and here Mr. Pearson, though he has his own opinions and has a good deal to say about it, is not much help to us. Shaw himself got near the truth—but not the whole of it—when he told the students of the R.A.D.A. that "he would never be a really great author because, just when he was about to achieve tragic heights, some absurd joke occurred to him and he could not resist the anti-climax." "I have got the tragedian and I have got the clown in me," he said, "and the clown trips me up in the most dreadful way." Shaw is here drawing attention to the most important dichotomy in his mind and works; but he is wrong in limiting it to a conflict between the clown and the tragedian; the real dichotomy is between the serious, passionate, and constructive part of him and the destructive and critical part of his mind which uses as its tool or weapon his superb gift of wit and humour.

Shaw belongs to the same human species as Voltaire. He did for the Victorian era of the second half of the nineteenth century what Voltaire did for the eighteenth century. Every now and again it becomes necessary to clean and clear out men's minds and their society—to open the windows, sweep out cobwebs, burn the rubbish, air the beds, and flush the drains. The most effective implement for this kind of mental and social sanitation is satire or comedy, wit or humour. A man who, like Shaw or Voltaire, has the divine gift of the ridiculous in the actual fabric of speech, thought, and imagination and uses it to destroy cruelties, lies, and stuffy hypocrisies is a great man and a great writer, and it is nonsense to regard him merely as a clown getting in the way of a tragedian.

Shaw is a great writer (even though he splits his infinitives) and here again in the perfect lucidity and clean cut edge of his prose, his power of producing "style" without, as he says, ever thinking about it, he again reminds one of Voltaire. He is also a great man, because it was he more than any one else who destroyed the social superstitions of Victorianism, who taught the younger generation between 1880 and 1914 to think and live freely. Owing to subsequent events it is fashionable to decry reason and truth, and the intellectuals whose intellects are almost as weak as their knees are at the moment preaching: "Back to Mumbo-Jumbo." But this is only a passing phase—unless indeed the civilisation for which Shaw stood is to be destroyed by the weak-kneed intellectuals and the strong-armed barbarians—and Shaw will be remembered as a great destroyer of lies.

And yet there is, as he says himself, something wrong about him somewhere, something which always prevents him entering the ranks of the greatest, whether as man, writer, or dramatist. It is something much deeper than the clown tripping up the tragedian. It is that the serious, constructive, creative, and imaginative part of him is of inferior quality and almost completely lacking in passion. He can destroy the evil things by his superb gift of comedy, but he has little or nothing to put in their place; since he is without the passion of the master-builder, he cannot build. That is why the Shaw of the twentieth century could betray the Shaw of the nineteenth and the man who wrote that "progress depends on our refusal to use brutal means even when they are efficacious" could condone the brutalities of "efficient" dictatorships. This deficiency naturally has a profound effect upon him as a dramatist. Here again it is not that he cannot write "tragedies," but that he can only write comedies, and comedies of criticism and destruction. He cannot be serious because he is without passion and therefore has nothing to be serious about. All the serious parts of his plays—for instance *St. Joan* or Act III of *Man and Superman*—wither in his hands or only keep alive by becoming comedy again. His religious plays and his political plays both fail, not as tragedies but simply as serious plays; they succeed as comedies and there is no essential difference between them and *Pygmalion*. You cannot be serious about religion, unless you feel some passion for religion and you cannot build politically unless you have the constructive imagination and the passion of the master-builder. And looking deeper into Shaw's dramatic creativeness, one sees that it is this deficiency which accounts for his inability to create a complete human character for the highest dramatic purposes, to make, as Shakespeare does, a real individual who becomes at the same time a symbol in the social or even cosmic background. St. Joan, Don Juan, and Caesar are, except as figures in comedy, as unsubstantial as Lady Cicely, Tanner, and Theodotus. It is significant that Shaw, who is normally an admirable critic, is blind to just this kind of highest achievement in drama and music. That is why he continually misses the point in Shakespeare and can compare Elgar with Beethoven.

LEONARD WOOLF

DETECTION AND THRILLERS

The Case of the Tea-Cosy's Aunt. By ANTHONY GILBERT. *Collins.* 8s. 6d.

Toper's End. By G. D. H. and MARGARET COLE. *Collins.* 8s. 6d.

Death Stalks the Ward. By B. G. WILLIAMSON. *Hutchinson.* 8s. 6d.

Clough Plays Murder. By LUKE PARSONS. *Hutchinson.* 8s. 6d.

Nine Dark Hours. By LENORE GLEN OFFORD. *Eldon.* 8s.

A Taste for Honey. By GERALD HEARD. *Cassell.* 7s. 6d.

Secret Mission By FRANK S. SMYTHE. *Hodder and Stoughton.* 8s. 6d.

The Daffodil Affair. By MICHAEL INNES. *Gollancz.* 8s. 6d.

The Tea Cosy was an elderly crank living in the same block of flats as Crook, Anthony Gilbert's exuberant detective (T. Kersey was the real name; the emendation is just a burst of Crook's high spirits). In the blackout of 1941 London he absent-mindedly mislays first his flat, then his aunt and finally himself. This is an intentionally frivolous description of the book, because the author is far more bent on providing Crook, the hero, with transatlantic wisecracks than on assembling the pieces of the crime plot in working order. The result is essentially unsatisfactory, although incidentally amusing. Wisecracks make a good sauce for murder, but there is no nourishment in them.

The Coles made such a success of their foreign refugees in *Knife in the Dark* that they decide to use the same material again in *Toper's End*. A benevolent English scientist provides hospitality for a mixed bag of German, Austrian, Italian and Dutch nationality at his country house. The jealousy and squabbling have reached full pitch, when the scientist's relations arrive on a visit—and someone steals the cyanide, and someone dopes the beer. The caricatures of refugee mentality are still amusing, but the plot is hackneyed and the detection, in spite of a great ox of a clue staring everyone in the face on an early page, is so feeble that Superintendent Wilson actually has to use third degree methods to extort a confession. The solution is biased, as all too often, by the Coles's politics—their signature tune. It is bad enough that in three out of four Christies the villain is either the handsomest man or the most attractive woman, but the Coles incorrigibly saddle their crimes on members of—shall we call them—the least *New-Statesman*-minded class. The admirable plan of printing a list of characters at the beginning of a detective story is adopted in *Toper's End*, only I must warn readers it is incomplete. At first I thought the omission must be deliberate and began to search for a dual personality; but it is not a sly trick—only a proof-reader's casualness.

Five years ago Miss Josephine Bell published *Murder in Hospital* with a most authentic and spirited account of the mysteries of a London Hospital. Since then there have appeared two or three more hospital murders, but none so good, in spite of the advantages of the setting. B. G. Williamson shows that she has the bitter personal experience necessary to do justice to those morbid institutions. Her description of a probationer's grim life of drudgery and discipline is enthralling and far the best part of *Death Stalks the Ward*. The detective plot against that background is ingeniously conceived, but so awkwardly developed, that one groans to see such a good idea bungled in the handling. A poor old patient is murdered in a crowded ward when she would have died anyhow within a week or two of natural causes. Now who would take the trouble to murder anyone in such a situation? The author has produced a perfect answer to this riddle as everyone who reads the book will be forced to agree.

Amateurishness again makes a sad hash of *Clough Plays Murder*. The plot, of an actual murder taking place during a game of "Murder," has been used before, but would be none the worse for that, if the treatment had a spark of originality. But a country house on a Scottish island seems familiar; the characters are the kind that attend the Chelsea Arts Ball in an undergraduate's dreams; and the action is jerky and improbable, to say the least of it. That leaves the high spirits, and there are plenty of those, in a mild uninfectious form. Jimmy Clough, the half-baked detective, is accompanied by a female secretary, who is always pulling her skirt an inch or two higher—but they pull those things higher in the U.S.A.

Nine Dark Hours is the book I enjoyed most on this list. Mrs. Offord is an American authoress with whose previous work I am unacquainted, but she writes with professional ease and fluency, and never a dull moment. The scene is San Francisco, where a lonely girl typist returns to her flat from a holiday to find a stranger on the sofa and not a visible trace of her possessions. She appeals to the landlord who refuses to recognise her. Her entire previous existence has been blotted out. From this flying start Mrs. Offord rattles the story along at a Californian pace. A baby has been kidnapped by someone known as The Cork. Where is the baby? Who is The Cork? The heroine can't believe a word anyone says. The suspense and excitement are terrific, until somewhere in the apartment building the heroine hears a baby crying and has to do lightning calculations in geometry to prevent a murder. On top of all the thrills the plot is sound, the solution a surprise and the climax as dramatic as anyone could wish. *Nine Dark Hours* is a triumph of slick competence.

Mr. Gerald Heard's name is so associated with Heard-Huxley theories of Yoga that one suspects some metaphysical catch in any book of his called "a mystery." But, as far as I can judge, *A Taste for Honey* is a perfectly straightforward story of crime, with no allegorical overtones. Even the word "mystery" is rather a misnomer, as the identity of the criminal and the nature of the crime are revealed on the earlier pages. Perhaps our flesh is meant to creep at the horrid possibilities of scientific insect-breeding, for the plot centres round bees and their habits. But in that case the science should be more authoritative. Bees are the most conservative little communists, and some of Mr. Heard's statements about them deviate too much from their party line for any practical beekeeper to accept. The book is very short, written in a pleasant, dry style, with a subacid flavour reminiscent of Mr. C. H. B. Kitchin's detective stories.

Secret Mission and *The Daffodil Affair* are the purest war thrillers, singled out because the first is written by an eminent mountaineer and the second by an eminent detective author. In *Secret Mission* a pacifist scientist retires to a Himalayan hidey-hole with his war-winning secret weapon, forcing the Germans and the English to send expeditions to climb after him. Mr. Smythe's thriller plot is trite enough, but the descriptions of Nepal will have a certain appeal to admirers of his other books on mountain-climbing. *The Daffodil Affair* is an absurdity calling itself a detective story. Daffodil was a feeble-minded cabhorse, kidnapped at Harrogate and carried off to South America for immoral purposes. If you think that funny, you may enjoy Michael Innes' latest lapse from respectability.

RALPH PARTRIDGE

STRAINED RELATIONS AT TIMES

Anglo-American Literary Relations. By GEORGE STUART GORDON. *Oxford Press.* 5s.

When the late President of Magdalen delivered the George Watson lectures in 1931, he made a happy choice of subject, for the field of Anglo-American literary relations had been largely neglected. Gordon was a late-comer here, but the range of the index to this pleasant volume shows that he made good preparation for his task.

The cultural contact between England and North America was lively from the beginning. The ministers and other scholars in Philadelphia and New England took care not to be cut off from their sources. Classical learning was held in honour. The school and the library were among the earliest of American institutions, and there was an eager public for new English books when *Waverley* and *Pickwick* were far in the future. Americans were always irritated by the charge that they were dependent upon England, their writers being mere echoes of the masters on this side. But after all the colonists were English and until their vast new lands were opened and settled how could they find their own means of expression? And yet a long time before the quarterly reviews gave up their ill-natured attacks upon an unliterary America the American invasion had been carried far. Benjamin Franklin was accepted as an intellectual of the first rank. Washington Irving was being read in England when Byron leapt into fame. Fenimore Cooper's *Leatherstocking* gathered a host of adherents while Scott was still in mid-career. Longfellow was already becoming the poet of the English people when *Uncle Tom's Cabin* broke all records, and in due course New England historians and Western humorists were to share a noteworthy Victorian triumph.

When he came to deal with the reports of English literary travellers in the United States, Gordon was able to enjoy himself. Captain Basil Hall it was who started the fashionable sniff. Marryat on the other hand wrote in a generous tone predicting the greatness of the Republic. Mrs Trollope's sparkling and malicious narrative was bought in tens of thousands, as of course was *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Americans could not be prevented from making large profits for their detractors. Dickens's two visits were contrasted triumphs that have never yet been approached. The delights of the first (1842) were buried in storm, but twenty-five years later author and public made mutual amends in tears and laughter. The famous readings were alike remunerative and exhausting.

Nothing could be more curious, and revealing, than the central fact in the revulsion of feeling against Dickens. He refused to be silent about the American piracy of books. Dickens used Walter Scott as a weapon of attack, pointing out that a small royalty on his sales in America would have saved him from the deadly labour of paying off his debts. American arguments in defence of the New York publishers were indigenous. English copyright, it was said, was a monopoly, created by a law which did not run outside these islands The need for cheap books in a new country was imperative; and "free books for a free country" was a good slogan. American authors of course were all for inclusive copyright, since very few of them could compete with the mighty ones in England. Henry Holt, the publisher, explained to a Senate Committee in 1886 that if it had not been for the magazines, excellent through the whole period, new American writers could not make headway even in their own country.

It is evident that Gordon had a particular interest in the author-lecturer, as to whose activities in America he was not too well informed. The discovery of the author's platform voice he believed, was made about the time of Emerson's early suggestion to Carlyle, who did not waste time upon it. But Coleridge and Hazlitt as lecturers came years before this. The pioneer lecturer in America was James Silk Buckingham, founder of the *Athenaeum* while the more or less regular novelists' pilgrimage was inaugurated by Thackeray in 1853. Gordon exaggerated its dimensions. He tells us that he looked with awe on its beginnings, as "on the source of some giant river" which it would be difficult to stop. Actually the novelists and poets making for America were never numerous in any year, and most of them thought more about their publishers and sales than about their platform appearances. Hugh Walpole was the last of the novelists to make a thorough business of lecturing and to enjoy it. The weight of the American author-lecturers had told heavily against their English competitors on the platform during some seasons before war and Mr. Bracken combined to apply the more effective brake.

Anglo-American literary relations we may rejoice to note are now enormously different,

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N.B.—Separate Prospectuses relating to 2½% National War Bonds, 1951–1953, to be held on the Post Office Register will be issued by His Majesty's Postmaster-General (and may be obtained at any Savings Bank Post Office or Bank), and by the National Debt Commissioners on behalf of Trustee Savings Banks. The amount subscribed by any person under the Prospectuses issued by His Majesty's Postmaster-General and by the National Debt Commissioners must not exceed £1,000.

and far better than they were at any time between, say, Dickens and Matthew Arnold; and in this connection Gordon reminds us of a typical incident of the 1860s. Henry Yates Thompson of Liverpool, the first owner of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, offered to endow at Cambridge University, a lectureship in American history, literature, and institutions. The offer was declined, solemnly and for reasons which, hardly credible to-day, are gleefully quoted in this book. The author, it should be remarked, was unable to complete the revision of his lectures before his last illness. They have been prepared for press by Mr. R. W. Chapman, who reproduces two first-rate passages quoted by Gordon near the end of the series. One is from the letters of Ambassador Page ("My own belief is that the only invincible thing in Europe are these same English,") and the other, in full, is Nevinson's double-edged "Goodbye, America!" A number of mistakes have slipped in. Oxford should not stnmble over Edgar Allan Poe and should know that Longfellow's first name was not William. And since H. L. Mencken can seldom write without saluting Baltimore, "Mr. Mencken of Chicago" is inexcusable.

S. K. Ratcliffe

FRENCH POETRY FOR THE ENGLISH

Des Vers de France. Selected by Laurence Bisson. *Penguin.* 9*d.*

Mr. Bisson has an advantage rare in anthologists. He is bilingual and as much at home in English as in French literature. He loves, and sees the faults in, both. No one then could be better equipped to present French poetry to an English public, and his introduction is a masterpiece.

He is confronted from the start by two facts: that poetry is above all other arts the expression of a nation's character and tradition, and that perhaps no two schools of Western-European poetry differ more profoundly than the French and the English. And he does not attempt to minimise these facts. Rather, by frankly admitting them, he makes it a little easier for the reader to surmount them. He warns us what we shall not find and points out what to look for. French poetry, at its best, is well described in these words—"the perfect balance of feeling and reflection, expressed and fulfilled in a disciplined and harmonious art." The French poet is essentially urbane, disciplined and wise. Whatever his faults, he will never sink into our prevailing vice—"rhythm and jingling sounds that signify nothing, a diction and an imagery which, failing to evoke, become vague and sink into bathos." France could never produce a Swinburne.

And yet the lover of English poetry will, justifiably, miss something in this careful anthology. Swinburne was a great poet, even if he could be bad. The supreme gift of our poets is unknown to the French—their rhapsodic intoxication with words and images, an intoxication seldom, if ever, found in any but Greek poetry.

Turning to the anthology itself, we find that space has compelled Mr. Bisson to skim very rapidly over his vast subject, picking only what seemed to him most representative. But he has gone back as far as the Middle Ages, when French poetry was so much closer to our own, and stopped only at Baudelaire, omitting the Parnassiens and the Symbolists. Space has also forced him to omit the whole of Victor Hugo. A wise omission, perhaps, for how convey Victor Hugo's vast proportions in two or three inevitably brief examples? But both omissions have their effect on one's general impression. For after Villon the poetry of France remained almost entirely an affair of the Salons, essentially well-bred and circumscribed, till Victor Hugo blew in like a wild west wind. And Verlaine with his music and his *débordements*, and Rimbaud with his passionate denunciation of life, both strike a chord which, to the English ear, is very recognisably poetic. With these knocked out, only Villon and Baudelaire are not on the side of the angels. Marot, Ronsard, Voltaire, Vigny, Musset, Gautier, how quite literally civilised they are, how well-behaved! Paris, one feels, has made and been made by these poets.

Still, within his limits, Mr. Bisson has managed to skim the best of the cream at his disposal. No lover of poetry can fail to recognise Christine de Pisan's "Rians vair yeulx," or Vigny's *Le Cor*, or Baudelaire's *Cythère*, with many more beside. And of the finest and most French of them all, Jean de la Fontaine, we have here *Le Héron*, *Les Deux Pigeons*—whose moral most English poets would, I think, detest—and the *Invocation* with its unforgettable opening lines:

> O douce Volupté, sans qui, dès notre enfance,
> Le vivre et le mourir nous deviendraient égaux . . .

Apollo is the god of the French muses, ours is Dionysus. Apollo is a great god, as Marot, Ronsard and Racine have shown, and it is well that we should learn to love him. But Dionysus, once known, is not to be forgotten. I am sufficiently a Scot to enjoy intoxication, and to feel that Shelley was perhaps not far wrong when he imagined Apollo silent—"with envy of my sweet pipings."

Flora Grierson

DISCOVERING AMERICA

Salsette Discovers America. By Jules Romains. Translated by Lewis Galantière. *Hutchinson.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Very light-weight, a balloon of journalism from the author of *Les Hommes de Bonne Volonté*. Romains has been doubly transplanted. Exile in America and the breaking-off of a massive fiction have left him for the moment empty as a writer. He has turned to journalism, *choses vues*, the cementing of friendships in a new world. Salsette discovering America serves as a ventriloquist's dummy; this stocky fellow-countryman, an intellectual of peasant descent, encounters the lightheadedness of New York, gets lost in subways, drives along miles of planned motorways in Brooklyn, eats, breathes and talks America with an agreeably critical enthusiasm. He is staggered, of course: in the circumstances (America still not being at war), who wouldn't be? He's staggered by the women in Fifth Avenue, by their looks, their colours, their dress, by everything about them, from the plastic underwear advertised in magazines to an assurance unparalleled in history; and to swing to the other extreme he is staggered and desolated by the succession of featureless small towns that confront every traveller setting out to explore an American countryside. Between ravishment and distaste come the comforts, food and drink, manners, the skyscraper, liberty, overpopulation, Myrtle Avenue in the Bowery: a mixture one swallows, like Whitman's poetry, with an eagerness tempered by the suspicion that one is being blown up by a bicycle pump. But on the whole Salsette is an enthusiast with a nose for what is captivating and new. Most of the book consists of dialogue between Salsette and his author, and light though the tone is this is a book which will do something to make Frenchmen and Americans understand each other, and will give the English reader an appreciation of both.

G. W. Stonier

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Week-end Competitions

No. 670

Set by Raymond Mortimer

The usual prizes are offered for the best English versions of the following poem. Competitors are at liberty to make any adaptations they think desirable.

LE DORMEUR DU VAL.

C'est un trou de verdure où chante une rivière
Accrochant follement aux herbes des haillons
D'argent, où le soleil, de la montagne fière,
Luit ; c'est un petit val qui mousse de rayons.

Un soldat jeune, bouche ouverte, tête nue
Et la nuque baignant dans le frais cresson bleu,
Dort ; il est étendu dans l'herbe, sous la nue,
Pâle dans son lit où la lumière pleut.

Les pieds dans les glaïeuls, il dort. Souriant comme
Sourirait un enfant malade, il fait un somme.
Nature, berce-le chaudement ; il a froid.

Les parfums ne font pas frissoner sa narine ;
Il dort dans le soleil, la main sur sa poitrine
Tranquille. Il a deux trous rouges au côté droit.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, December 14th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 667

Set by Roger Marvell

Competitors are asked to summarise the distinction between: (1) Charming, fascinating, and alluring. (2) Proud, vain, and conceited. (3) Clever, intelligent, and intellectual. All nine epithets to be defined. Competitors may add illustrations but are reminded that brevity is the soul of wit.

Report by Roger Marvell

A very large and interesting entry, on which I should like to write at length. For the definitions show how desperately vague and clumsy our language is as a means of communication, how often what one intends as praise must be taken as blame. Most competitors, for instance, give for " clever " a pejorative sense: for my part I use the word to suggest quickness, neatness and adaptability—the active quality of which intelligence is the passive or the receptive. " Intellectual," again, is variously taken to connote lack of sense, old age, progressiveness and homosexuality! Notably good entries came from First Year Sixth, X, Stanley J. Sharpless, I. Drazin, R. Dallas-Brett, Richard Pomfret, Guy Innes, J. H. T., E. W. F., Stephen Bylansen, Freda Bromhead, and W. A. Thorpe. Well worthy of prizes are R. S. affray, F. J. H. Grant, Robert Upcott, Castor and William Bliss. But as both prize-money and space are limited, I recommend that 15s. each go to E. F. C. and Joan Evans, and 7s. 6d. each to K. C. D., Leslie Johnson and F. C. C. (I was tempted to reject F. C. C. for disregarding my hint about brevity, but the disquisition is too good not to print.)

FIRST PRIZE.

(1) The *charming* attracts restful contemplation.
The *fascinating* attracts unrestful contemplation.
The *alluring* attracts out of contemplation.

Her uncle thought the bride charming, her bridesmaids thought her fascinating, and her groom thought her alluring.

(2) A *proud* man cares nothing for others' opinions of him.
A *vain* man cares for nothing else.
A *conceited* man is sure they are good.

Wordsworth was proud, Byron vain, Lord Chesterfield conceited.

(3) A *clever* man spots points.
An *intelligent* man surveys a wide area.
An *intellectual* man weighs solids.

Be clever in cross-examination, intelligent in argument, and intellectual in summing up.

(E. F. C.)

FIRST PRIZE.

I. (*a*) That which is charming delights both our judgment and emotions.
(*b*) That which is fascinating delights our emotions, with judgment suspended.
(*c*) That which is alluring delights our emotions against our better judgment.

II. A man is proud of what he is by common consent; vain, of what a few men think he is; and conceited, of what no one thinks he is but himself.

III. A man is clever who makes use to his own advantage of the judgments of others; intelligent, who understands the judgments of others; and intellectual, who makes judgments which others will follow. (JOAN EVANS)

SECOND PRIZE.

(1) The function of the charming is to attract; the role of the fascinating is to distract; the design of the alluring is to abstract.

(2) The proud despise admiration; the vain lavish it upon themselves; and the conceited expect it from others.

(3) The clever are possessed of brains; the intelligent blessed with them; and the intellectual obsessed by them. (LESLIE JOHNSON)

SECOND PRIZE.

(1) One who is *charming* appeals to the heart; one who is *fascinating* to the mind; one who is *alluring* to the senses.

(2) The *proud* care too little for the opinion of others, the *vain* too much, and the *conceited* care only for their own opinion of themselves.

(3) A *clever* man knows a good deal and thinks he knows more; an *intelligent* man knows how little he knows; an *intellectual* man knows how to acquire more knowledge. (K. C. D.)

SECOND PRIZE.

(1) *Charm* keeps something of its old magical sense; but it is innocent magic. It is a " sweet attractive kind of grace " (though compatible with extreme ugliness), having some subtle connection with vitality. Tired people often imitate their own spontaneous charm; this is sad. Worldly people imitate a charm they never had; this is devastating. Hence the words: " Do let me introduce you to Mrs. A.; she is so charming," make the heart sink. Whereas " she is so *fascinating* " sounds more hopeful. Mrs. A. may prove to be both wicked and beautiful, like the basilisk, which killed with its eyes. The word is ambivalent, tinged with fear; we can be fascinated by what repels us. Pseudo-fascination is even more devastating than pseudo-charm. *Alluring* is a narrower term; fleshly, not magical. It suggests a woman deliberately and skilfully exploiting her sex to captivate and enslave. Delilah was alluring. But a very young woman can be alluring without conscious design. Sham charm may sometimes succeed; imitation allurement never.

(2) *Proud* people are concerned with their own inner integrity (the Spanish *el honor*); *vain* people with their effect on others. The vain wilt, if not appreciated, and are touchy because inwardly unsure. Artists are vain in their human relationships, proud as regards their own work. The tradition that a woman's vanity is centred in her dress and appearance is still frequently true. A *conceited* person is genuinely sure of himself and of his importance in the cosmic scheme. He is most often found in humble circumstances, sometimes a craftsman who (unlike the artist) knows he can do his own job perfectly. In England he usually has a non-conformist air. He has a tendency to wear large spectacles and have a concealed adoring mother. He knows the best way to do everything, from poking a fire to winning a war. He expects admiration, but without uneasiness; for he always has his own hear felt applause. Addison sent for his son-in-law to see how a Christian should die; but the son-in-law was only accessory to Addison's satisfaction with his own performance.

(3) Ulysses was *clever*. So are some dogs; cats, with their quick brains, will not deign to make an effort. Cleverness implies a pleasure in using nimble wits nimbly. Darwin, when persuading his father to let him join the *Beagle*, said: " I shall be very clever, sir, if I spend more than my allowance on board ship." His father replied grimly: " They tell me you *are* very clever." This illustrates the common confusion of " clever " with *intelligent* and *intellectual*. To the simple-minded a conjurer, Plato, and an absconding bank manager (if successful) are equally clever. The more sophisticated may call a man clever to insinuate that he is intellectually and morally unsound; if he is an artist, it damns his work as slick and superficial. An *intelligent* person has an all-round power of understanding with the heart as well as with the head. You can be no more than potentially *intellectual*, if you have not been specially trained to think clearly and reason from point to point. There is no common saying, " too intellectual by half," but there should be. Intellectual people are often intuitively and emotionally stupid. They may have allowed their feelings and intuition to atrophy; or they may be naturally ill-endowed with them and choose an intellectual career to hide the fact from themselves and others.

(F. C. C.)

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